

MUSTARD SEED MONTHLY DEVOTIONAL

# JUNE



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# Mustard Seed Monthly Devotional

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# Introduction

I want to ask you a question before we begin.

What is the smallest thing you govern?

Not the biggest. Not the most impressive. Not the role you put on your CV or introduce yourself with at a conference. The smallest. Tuesday morning, when nobody is watching and the decision still needs to be made. The conversation in your home when you are tired and your child needs more than you feel you have. The moment in the meeting room when the pressure is quiet but the temptation to cut a corner is loud. The private negotiation inside your own mind between who you know you should be and what you feel like doing right now.

That smallest thing is your throne.

I have been fascinated by the kings of Israel and Judah for a long time, not the famous ones that everyone preaches about, but the forgotten ones. The ones who reigned for six months and were assassinated. The ones who started brilliantly and ended in disgrace. The ones who got one line of commendation in all of scripture and somehow managed to make it count. The ones who had everything handed to them and still found a way to lose it.

What I have discovered in studying them is that their stories are not ancient history. They are mirrors. The same character flaws that destroyed Ahab are alive and well in the modern office. The same pride that brought Uzziah down at the very

peak of his success is the same pride that waits patiently for our most successful season to make its move. The same relational blind spot that led the godly Jehoshaphat into a catastrophic alliance is the same one that leads talented, well-meaning leaders today into partnerships that slowly drain the anointing from everything they have built.

But the encouragement is just as real as the warning. The same quiet faithfulness that made Jotham great with almost no fanfare is available to every parent, teacher, team leader, and business owner who simply chooses to walk rightly day after day, without needing a crowd to confirm it. The same prayer that brought Jehoshaphat's enemies to confusion before a sword was raised is available to every leader who is willing to fast before they fight. The same willingness to spread the letter before God that Hezekiah practised in his darkest hour is available to anyone who will take their most threatening problem into the place of prayer rather than the place of strategy.

This June, we are going to the palace. Not to observe, but to learn. Every devotional this month is a throne lesson, drawn from a king's life and applied directly to wherever God has placed you. Whether you manage a boardroom or a bedroom, a congregation or a classroom, a team of hundreds or a home of two, you are a king or queen in the arena God has assigned you. And how you reign matters, not just for you, but for everyone who lives within the borders of your influence.

The lessons from the palace are waiting. Let's dive in.

'Tayo Alofun  
Mustard Seed  
June 2026

# 1

## June 1: Everyone Has a Throne

*“You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet.” — Psalm 8:5-6 (NIV)*

**B**efore Israel ever had a monarchy, before Samuel anointed Saul, before any palace was built in Jerusalem, God had already established His governance model for humanity. Genesis 1:26 records the original mandate: “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule.” The word translated “rule” is *radah*, the same word used elsewhere for the dominion of a king. From the very beginning, every human being was designed to reign over something. Dominion is not an upgrade for the specially qualified. It is the original factory setting of every person made in the image of God.

This means the mother navigating three school pickups and

two homework crises before dinner has a throne. The teacher standing in front of twenty-three distracted twelve-year-olds at 8:30 on a Monday morning has a throne. The mid-level manager responsible for a team of five has a throne. The deacon overseeing the hospitality team at a church of forty has a throne. The man who is the only person in his home who understands the family finances has a throne. Most of us do not think about our lives this way because we reserve the language of governance for the visibly powerful. But this assumption is not scriptural.

Scripture does not grade thrones by size. It grades them by faithfulness. Jesus made this unmistakably clear in Matthew 25:21 when the master said to the servant who had been faithful over a little: “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much.” The commendation did not come for the amount governed. It came for how faithfully what was given was governed. God’s economy rewards the quality of stewardship, not the size of the sphere.

This changes everything about how you approach your ordinary Monday. The conversation you are about to have with your child is not just parenting. It is governance. The decision you make in your office today is not just business. It is stewardship of a throne. The way you manage your own inner life, your thought patterns, your emotional responses, your private disciplines, is the most fundamental form of governance there is. Before any king can govern a kingdom, he must first govern himself. And every single day gives you the raw material of that practice.

Today, write down every sphere of influence you currently hold, no matter how small it appears. Your home. Your workplace. Your community group. Your friendship circle. Your own inner life. Next to each one, write a single honest sentence: how am I currently reigning here? Not how I wish I

were reigning. How I actually am. That honest inventory is the first step toward governing each sphere with the intentionality God designed you for.

### **Prayer**

Father, I confess that I have not always taken seriously the crown you placed on my head. I have treated my sphere of influence as something to survive rather than something to govern. Open my eyes this month to every throne I hold, the visible ones and the hidden ones. Teach me to reign with the wisdom and humility of someone who knows the King of kings is watching. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 2: The Throne Inherited, Not Earned

*“Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him.” — 1 Kings 12:8 (NIV)*

**H**e had the most powerful throne in the ancient world handed to him on a plate. He destroyed it in a single meeting. Rehoboam was Solomon’s son, inheriting a kingdom at its absolute peak, unified, wealthy, internationally respected, and feared. All he had to do was hold what had been given to him. He did not need to be brilliant. He simply needed to not be catastrophically foolish. He chose catastrophic foolishness.

On the day of his coronation, the people came with a reasonable request: lighten the heavy burden of taxation and forced labour Solomon had imposed, and we will serve you loyally. Rehoboam took three days to deliberate. He consulted the

elders who had served his father, men with decades of hard-won insight into the relationship between a king and his people. Their counsel was clear: serve the people and they will serve you forever. Then he went to his peers, the young men he had grown up with, who had never governed anything. Their advice was the opposite: show them your little finger is thicker than your father's waist. And Rehoboam, on the most consequential day of his leadership life, chose his friends over the elders.

Ten of the twelve tribes walked away before the week was over. The kingdom his grandfather David had forged through decades of warfare and wisdom was split in two within three days, and it never reunified again. One meeting. One decision. Generational consequences. I think of a young executive I once knew who was promoted into senior leadership ahead of his peers. Talented, but surrounded almost entirely by people who affirmed him and never challenged him. When a veteran raised serious concerns about his strategy, he dismissed it publicly and moved on. The strategy failed within two quarters. He left the company within a year, having spent twelve months progressively isolating himself from every voice that offered friction.

Rehoboam's failure was not primarily a failure of intelligence. It was a failure of humility. He could not receive counsel that made him feel constrained, because somewhere inside, the title had already convinced him he no longer needed anyone else's input. This is one of the most common and most devastating failure modes of inherited leadership: the person who receives a position they did not build mistakes the absence of personal struggle for the presence of personal competence. The throne felt familiar because he had grown up watching it. Familiarity is not qualification.

Proverbs 11:14 says: “Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counsellors there is safety.” The safety is not in having counsellors present. It is in actually hearing what they say. Rehoboam had the elders in the room. He simply chose not to receive what they offered. Every leader has a Rehoboam moment: the point at which the counsel being offered is uncomfortable, inconvenient, or contrary to what they have already decided they want to do. The quality of your leadership will be partly determined by what you do in that moment.

Today, identify the wisest voices in your life, the ones who have earned the right to speak into your governance. Not the most agreeable voices. The most honest ones. When did you last genuinely listen to one of them, not to confirm what you already think, but to hear something you might have missed? If it has been a while, reach out to one today. Your kingdom may depend on the conversation.

### **Prayer**

Father, save me from leadership that only hears what it wants to hear. Give me the humility to sit with counsel that makes me uncomfortable and ask honestly whether it is carrying something I need. Surround me with wise voices, and give me the grace to actually listen. In Jesus' name, amen.

## 3

### June 3: The Throne Given by God and Surrendered to Fear

*“Jeroboam thought to himself, ‘The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam.’”*

— 1 Kings 12:26–27 (NIV)

**G**od handed Jeroboam ten tribes on a plate. Not through ambition or scheming, but through a direct prophetic promise delivered by the prophet Ahijah, who tore his cloak into twelve pieces, gave Jeroboam ten, and declared that God was giving him ten tribes because of Solomon’s unfaithfulness. The condition was straightforward: walk in my ways, keep my commands, and I will build you an enduring dynasty. It was as generous and as clear a divine mandate as any leader could ever receive.

Then Jeroboam got to work undermining it. The moment he

was established as king, fear arrived. He began to reason that if the people continued going to Jerusalem to worship at the temple, their hearts would eventually return to Rehoboam. So he built two golden calves, installed them at Bethel and Dan, and told the people these were the gods who brought them out of Egypt. He manufactured a religion to protect a position that God had promised to sustain. He replaced trust in God's word with a man-made system designed to manage the risk he was too afraid to leave in God's hands.

This is the particular tragedy of Jeroboam: he was not a godless man who stumbled into leadership. He was a God-appointed leader who lost his nerve. The calves were not the product of atheism. They were the product of insecurity. When the leader who has received a genuine divine mandate stops believing that God will sustain what God gave them, they begin to build golden calves, alternative systems, human strategies, and structures designed to do what only God can do. And every calf they build takes them one step further from the very throne they were trying to protect.

I have seen this pattern in ministry more times than I can count. A pastor receives a genuine call, builds something real, and then, as the ministry grows, begins to make decisions driven not by God's direction but by the fear of losing what has been built. The preaching shifts subtly toward what keeps people comfortable rather than what keeps them growing. Financial decisions are made to protect the institution rather than advance the mission. Voices that carry honest challenge are quietly sidelined. The golden calves look different in every generation, but the fear behind them is always the same.

Jeroboam's sin became so synonymous with this pattern that the phrase "the sins of Jeroboam" appears repeatedly

throughout Kings as a shorthand for the particular failure of leading people away from God in order to preserve your own position. It became a dynasty of dysfunction, and it all started with one fearful calculation made by a man who had been given more than enough reason to trust God instead.

Today, ask yourself honestly: is there any area of your leadership where you have built a golden calf? A system, strategy, or compromise designed to protect something God promised to sustain? Identify it, name it, and bring it to God. What He gave, He can keep. What He sustains does not need your manipulation to survive.

### **Prayer**

Father, forgive me for the golden calves I have built out of fear. For the times I have tried to protect by human means what you promised to sustain by divine faithfulness. Teach me to trust you with what you gave me. I lay down the fear today. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 4: The Throne Reformed by Courage

*“Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as his father David had done. He expelled the male shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols his ancestors had made.” — 1 Kings 15:11-12 (NIV)*

**A**sa inherited a kingdom soaked in idolatry. Not the kind that crept in gradually during his watch, but the kind that had been normalized over generations, embedded in the culture, protected by powerful interests, and, most uncomfortably of all, installed by his own grandmother Maakah, who had made a repulsive Asherah pole and held the position of queen mother. This was not a situation Asa created. It was a situation he woke up to. And the first question his leadership had to answer was whether he would challenge what his family had allowed.

He did. He removed the high places. He expelled the shrine

prostitutes. He destroyed the idols his ancestors had made. And then he did the most personally costly thing of all: he removed his grandmother Maakah from her position as queen mother because of the idol she had made. In a culture where honour of elders was paramount and the queen mother held enormous social influence, this was an act of extraordinary moral courage. He chose obedience over family loyalty, and righteousness over comfort.

This is the kind of reform that costs something. Not the easy adjustments, the policy tweaks, the cosmetic changes that make a leader look progressive without requiring anything truly difficult. But the confrontation of something that has power, that has history, that has relationships attached to it, and that will not be removed without someone being upset. The leaders who change things are always the ones willing to pay that price. The leaders who maintain the status quo are always the ones who decided the cost was too high.

I think of a manager I know who was brought into a department with a longstanding culture of cutting corners on quality control. It had been that way for years, the previous manager had allowed it, and several senior team members had built their reputations on the efficiencies the shortcuts produced. Within three months of arriving, he had removed the shortcuts, had difficult conversations with the senior team members, and had one person exit the team entirely. The results took a year to show in the numbers, but they showed. He reformed the throne he was given, even when it was uncomfortable.

Asa's story carries a warning embedded in its commendation. Scripture notes that he removed most of the high places, but not all of them. The people still offered sacrifices and burned incense on the remaining high places. Even the most courageous

reform can have residual blind spots: the areas we address partially because full address feels like too much, or because we have convinced ourselves that some things are not worth the conflict. Those partial reforms tend to become the seeds of future problems.

Today, look honestly at your sphere of governance. Is there something that has been normalised in your space that you know should not be there? A culture, a practice, a relationship dynamic, a standard that has been allowed to slide? The courage to confront it is available to you. The question is whether you are willing to pay what reform costs.

### **Prayer**

Father, give me Asa's courage. The kind that confronts what is wrong even when it is close to home, even when it is inconvenient, even when it costs me relationally. I do not want to preside over a sphere I was too timid to reform. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 5: The Throne That Finished Poorly

*“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 the physicians.” — 2 Chronicles 16:12 (NIV)*

**A**sa’s beginning was one of the finest in Judah’s royal history. But the book of his leadership closes on a note that should make every long-serving leader pause and take stock. In his later years, when threatened by Baasha king of Israel, Asa did something he would never have done in his earlier chapters: he emptied the temple treasury to buy a military alliance with the king of Aram, relying on foreign muscle rather than the God who had given him every victory he had ever known. When the prophet Hanani confronted him about it, Asa had the prophet thrown into prison and brutally oppressed some of the people at the same time.

That is a very sad fall for a man who once removed his own

grandmother from power rather than compromise his obedience to God. What happened between the Asa who tore down the Asherah pole and the Asa who imprisoned a prophet? The answer is gradual. It always is. Long success can breed a subtle self-sufficiency that feels nothing like pride and everything like experience. The leader who has seen God work through them for decades can quietly begin to trust the accumulated wisdom of their experience more than the fresh counsel of God's voice. The reservoir of past victories becomes a substitute for present dependence.

Then came the disease in his feet. God, in mercy, offered Asa one more opportunity to return to the pattern of his better years, one more moment to cry out and be answered. Instead, he consulted only physicians and shut God entirely out of the room. Not because he had become an atheist. But because something had calcified in him, some old offence or pride or self-reliance, that made it feel impossible to be the man who needed God again. He died two years later.

The tragedy of Asa is not that he failed at the end. It is that he failed unnecessarily. He had the resources. He had the history. He had the God. What he lacked was the humility to remain dependent on the One who had made all his previous success possible. Leadership longevity requires a particular kind of ongoing surrender: the daily choice to remain as dependent on God in year thirty as you were in year one, even though by year thirty you have far more to lean on besides.

There is a painful irony in the phrase about his feet. Feet, in biblical imagery, represent walk and direction. Asa's spiritual feet had gone lame long before his physical ones did. He had stopped walking with God in the way he once did, and the physical affliction may have been the mercy of a God who wanted

his attention one final time.

Today, examine how your dependence on God has changed over time. Has long experience quietly replaced fresh trust? Is there a hardness in you, toward a voice, a correction, or a season of vulnerability, that was not there when you first began? The willingness to be corrected and to remain dependent is not weakness. It is what makes a long reign worth reading about.

### **Prayer**

Father, keep me from finishing poorly. Where success has bred self-sufficiency, humble me. Where I have imprisoned the voices that carry your correction, forgive me and soften my heart. I want to end as well as I began, more dependent on you in year thirty than in year one. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 6: The Throne Built by Prayer

*“We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.” —  
2 Chronicles 20:12 (NIV)*

**I**t is one of the most disarmingly honest prayers in all of scripture, and it came from a king. A vast alliance of three nations had mobilised against Jehoshaphat. The intelligence report was overwhelming: a great multitude is coming against you. The military calculus was clear. Judah was outnumbered, outresourced, and facing a coalition that had never been assembled against them before. Any leader in that situation would have been justified in reaching for every strategic tool available. Jehoshaphat reached for none of them first. He proclaimed a fast throughout Judah and stood before the assembly and prayed.

What he did not say in that prayer is almost as significant as what he did say. He did not remind God of his military prowess. He did not present a plan for God to bless. He did not spiritualise

a strategy he had already decided on. He said: we have no power, we do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you. That prayer is the theological opposite of a leader who brings God into a plan they have already formed. It is a leader who comes to God before the plan exists, with empty hands and open eyes, and waits.

The response was immediate and complete. The Spirit of God came upon a Levite named Jahaziel in the middle of the assembly and delivered the battle plan: you will not need to fight in this battle. Go down to the battle and stand firm. See the salvation of the Lord on your behalf. The plan was not formed in the war room. It was delivered in the prayer meeting. And it was available only because the king had created space for it by refusing to lead with his own resources.

What followed is one of the most unusual military victories in the Old Testament. Jehoshaphat put the singers at the front of the army. Not the cavalry. Not the elite troops. The worshippers. As they sang praise to God, the enemy coalition turned on each other and destroyed themselves before Judah arrived at the battlefield. The people of Judah spent three days collecting the plunder. It took longer to gather the spoils than it had taken God to win the war.

The principle here is not that leaders should avoid strategy or be passive in the face of threats. Jehoshaphat was a capable administrator who had built up Judah's defences effectively during peace. The principle is that the most sophisticated strategy conceived without first hearing from God is always less powerful than the simplest instruction received in the place of prayer. The leader who prays as Jehoshaphat prayed will always find that God steps into the gap that humility creates.

Today, bring the most pressing challenge in your sphere of governance to God before you bring it to your team, your

strategy, or your own experience. Sit with it in prayer long enough to actually listen. You may not hear an audible voice, but you will find that something shifts when you lead with the posture of “I do not know what to do, but my eyes are on you.”

**Prayer**

Father, teach me to pray before I plan. Where I have been leading with strategy and adding prayer as a footnote, reverse the order. I bring you my most pressing challenge today and I say honestly: I do not know what to do. But my eyes are on you. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 7: The Throne That Worshipped Before It Won

*“After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him for the splendour of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: ‘Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever.’” — 2 Chronicles 20:21 (NIV)*

**S**ending singers ahead of soldiers is not a military strategy, that is faith on another level. When Jehoshaphat positioned the worshippers at the front of the army, he was not being naive about the nature of warfare. He was making a declaration about the nature of the victory: this battle belongs to God, and what belongs to God should be preceded by His praise. The singers were not the warmup act before the real action. They were the advance unit of a different kind of force entirely.

The moment they began to sing, the enemies turned on each

other. Scripture is specific about the timing: it was when they began to sing and praise that the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir. Not before. Not after. When. The worship was not a ritual preceding the battle. It was the mechanism of the victory. Something in the atmosphere of genuine, faith-filled praise creates conditions that the enemy cannot operate in. The worship disoriented the enemy coalition more effectively than any military formation Judah could have assembled.

This truth is a consistent thread through the entire Bible. When Paul and Silas sang hymns in prison at midnight in Acts 16, the foundations shook and every door was opened. When the priests stepped into the Jordan River in Joshua 3, the waters parted. God's most dramatic interventions on behalf of His people tend to follow acts of faith that look, from the outside, like they have nothing to do with solving the problem. Worship is not what you do while you wait for God to act. It is often what releases God to act.

In leadership terms, this translates into something deeply practical. The team, the family, the congregation, the business that is led by someone who carries a genuine spirit of worship operates in a different atmosphere than one that is led by someone whose leadership is entirely driven by competence and strategy. Worship does not make you less strategic. It makes your strategy spiritually potent. It aligns what you are doing with the purposes of a God who is already at work ahead of you.

There is also something worth noting about what the singers sang: "Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever." They did not sing about the battle. They did not compose a victory anthem about what they were about to accomplish. They sang about who God is and the permanence of His love. Worship

that is rooted in God's character rather than our circumstances is the most stable kind, and the most powerful. It does not depend on the battle going well. It declares the goodness of God before the outcome is visible.

Today, before you engage the most pressing challenge in your sphere, take five minutes to worship. Not to ask, not to present, not to plan. Just worship. Acknowledge who God is. Let the singers go out ahead of you. Then watch what God does with the space that worship creates.

### **Prayer**

Father, teach me to lead with worship rather than strategy. Where I have been treating praise as an afterthought rather than an advance unit, shift my instincts. I choose to worship you before I see the outcome, because you are worthy of it regardless. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 8: The Throne That Thrived Under Mentorship

*“Joash did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all the years Jehoiada the priest instructed him.” — 2 Kings 12:2 (NIV)*

**T**he phrase that commends Joash is also the phrase that qualifies him, and the qualification deserves a long, honest look. Joash did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, all the years Jehoiada the priest instructed him. Not all the years he reigned. All the years Jehoiada instructed him. The integrity of this king was inseparable from the presence of his mentor. Remove Jehoiada and you remove the scaffolding that was holding the building upright.

Joash's story begins with one of the most dramatic rescues in royal history. As an infant, he was hidden in the temple for six years while his grandmother Athaliah, having murdered the rest of the royal family, ruled illegitimately over Judah. Jehoiada the

priest had smuggled him out and concealed him, at enormous personal risk, until the moment was right. Then he orchestrated the coup, installed the seven-year-old Joash on the throne, and spent the rest of his life guiding, protecting, and forming this young king he had saved. The mentorship was not incidental to Joash's reign. It was the reason the reign was possible at all.

There is something genuinely moving about what Jehoiada gave Joash: not just instruction, but proximity. He did not disciple from a distance. He stayed close, remained present, and maintained influence not through position but through relationship. And because of that sustained, personal investment, Joash was able to accomplish significant things, including the restoration of the temple that had fallen into disrepair under Athaliah's reign. It was a good chapter of leadership, producing tangible results for the kingdom.

But the phrase "all the years Jehoiada instructed him" carries a hidden warning: what about the years after? Every mentored leader must eventually move from dependence on the mentor's presence to ownership of the mentor's values. The goal of good mentorship is not to create a follower who cannot function without the leader. It is to shape someone who has so thoroughly internalized what they were taught that the teaching continues to govern them even in the teacher's absence. Joash, as we will see tomorrow, never made that transition.

For now, the lesson of this chapter of Joash's life is the gift and the necessity of mentorship itself. The quality of a leader's inner circle, and especially the presence of a Jehoiada figure, someone older, wiser, and genuinely invested in your formation rather than your performance, is one of the most significant determinants of whether a reign will be faithful. Who is your Jehoiada? Who has the access and the authority to instruct you,

not just advise you?

Today, take stock of the mentorship relationships in your life. Who is currently speaking into your governance of your sphere, not as a consultant or a peer, but as someone with enough closeness and enough wisdom to instruct? If that seat is empty, make it a matter of prayer and intentional pursuit. No leader is too experienced to need a Jehoiada.

**Prayer**

Father, send me a Jehoiada. Someone with the wisdom, the closeness, and the courage to instruct me rather than merely advise me. And where that person is already in my life, give me the humility to actually receive what they offer. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 9: The Throne That Collapsed Without the Mentor

*“After the death of Jehoiada, the officials of Judah came and paid homage to the king, and he listened to them.” —  
2 Chronicles 24:17 (NIV)*

**T**hree words carry the entire tragedy: he listened to them. Them being the officials who arrived after Jehoiada’s death with an agenda that had been quietly waiting for this moment. While the priest was alive, his influence created a kind of gravitational field around the king that kept those voices at a distance. The moment he was gone, they moved in quickly, and Joash, who had never developed the spiritual backbone to govern independently of his mentor, had no resistance to offer.

The decline was swift and dark. The officials persuaded him to abandon the temple of God and return to worshipping the Asherah poles and idols. God sent prophets to bring them back, but the people would not listen. Then Zechariah, the son of

Jehoiada, the very son of the man who had saved Joash's life, stood up and delivered God's rebuke. And Joash ordered him stoned to death in the temple courtyard. As Zechariah was dying, he said: "May the Lord see this and call you to account." Joash murdered the son of the man who had rescued him from death as an infant, in the very temple that man had spent his life protecting.

There are few stories in scripture that illustrate the danger of borrowed faith more devastatingly than this one. Joash had inhabited someone else's spiritual convictions for forty years. He had lived within the structure of Jehoiada's faith without ever building his own. And when the structure was removed, there was nothing underneath it. The house that looked solid was hollow at its foundation, and every wind of influence that arrived after Jehoiada's death found it easy to blow through.

The application is confronting for anyone who has grown up in a strong spiritual environment, whether a godly home, a mentoring relationship, or a formative church community. There comes a point in every person's life when the faith that was modelled to you must become the faith that belongs to you. Not a rejection of what you were given, but a personal appropriation of it: a moment when you decide, from the inside, that what you have been shown is true and that you will govern your life by it regardless of whether the person who showed it to you is still in the room.

Joash never had that moment. The tragedy is not that he was a bad man. It is that he was an incomplete one: shaped from the outside but never transformed from within. External formation without internal ownership is always one removal away from collapse. The mentor's job is to become unnecessary. The mentee's job is to make sure they are.

Today, examine your own faith honestly. Is it yours? Not who taught it to you or who models it around you, but yours, personally owned, personally decided, personally practiced when no one who shaped you is watching. If the most significant spiritual influence in your life were suddenly removed, what would remain? The answer to that question reveals the true foundation you are governing from.

### **Prayer**

Father, I do not want borrowed faith. I want a faith that is mine, that I have chosen, that governs me from the inside when the external scaffolding is gone. Take everything that is merely inherited and make it personally mine through encounter with you. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 10: Open the Temple First

*“In the first month of the first year of his reign, he opened the doors of the temple of the Lord and repaired them.” — 2 Chronicles 29:3 (NIV)*

**F**irst month. First year. First act. How precise can it get? Hezekiah had just inherited a kingdom from his father Ahaz, one of the most faithless kings in Judah’s history. The temple had been closed. The sacred objects had been removed. Altars to foreign gods had been installed in every corner of Jerusalem. Ahaz had, in his final years, locked the doors of the house of God and walked away from it entirely. Hezekiah had barely unpacked before he was moving toward those doors.

What makes this so instructive is what Hezekiah could have done first. He could have assessed the military situation, which was precarious. He could have stabilised the economy, which had been disrupted under Ahaz’s misrule. He could have

addressed the political relationships with surrounding nations that his father had mismanaged. All of those things needed attention. None of them was his first priority. He opened the temple, and then he called the priests and Levites to consecrate themselves and restore it. The practical problems would follow. The spiritual centre came first.

Hezekiah understood something that the most effective leaders in any domain grasp intuitively: the health of what you govern flows from the spiritual centre of how you govern it. A home where the presence of God is consistently neglected will develop a particular kind of drift, quiet and gradual, that no amount of parenting strategy can correct. A business whose leader has disconnected from God will find that the decisions made there carry a subtle directionlessness that efficiency cannot fix. A church whose leadership has become so busy managing the institution that they have stopped tending to their own walk with God will produce programs without power.

Reopening the temple was not a religious ritual. It was a strategic act of leadership. Hezekiah was saying: before we address anything else, we must address the condition of our relationship with God. Everything else we build will only be as strong as this foundation. And history vindicated him. Within the same chapter, the worship was restored, the sacrifices were made, the singing began again, and the text says the whole assembly bowed in worship and the singers sang and the trumpeters sounded. Revival preceded reform. The temple opened, and then everything else became possible.

Think about your own sphere of governance. Where is the temple in your domain? Not a building, but the place where God has access to the centre of what you govern. The prayer life that gives God space to speak into your decisions. The personal

disciplines that keep you spiritually alert. The regular moments of consecration where you return your leadership to God and ask Him to lead through you. Is that place open or closed? Has the pressure of managing the kingdom caused you to lock the doors of the most important room?

Today, open the temple. Whatever that looks like in your specific context, make the spiritual centre of your governance your first priority rather than your last. Do not address the political problems, the financial pressures, or the strategic challenges before you have opened the doors and invited God back into the centre of your reign.

### **Prayer**

Father, show me where I have closed the temple doors. Where busyness, pressure, or drift has caused me to lock you out of the centre of what I govern. I open those doors today. Come back to the centre. Lead from the inside. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 11: Spread the Letter Before God

*“Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord.” — 2 Kings 19:14 (NIV)*

**T**he letter was from Sennacherib, king of Assyria, the most powerful military force in the known world at the time and its contents were designed to produce fear. It catalogued every nation Assyria had already destroyed, listed every god those nations had trusted that had proved useless against Assyrian might, and concluded with a direct challenge: what makes you think your God is any different? It was not just a military threat. It was a theological attack, a direct assault on the believability of everything Hezekiah’s faith rested on.

Hezekiah read it. He did not pretend it was not as serious as it was. He did not minimise the threat in order to project confidence he did not feel. He did not gather his advisors immediately and begin a contingency strategy session. He went

to the temple. He took the letter, physical and specific, with all of its menacing contents intact, and he spread it out on the floor before God. And then he prayed one of the most extraordinary leadership prayers in the Bible, a prayer that did not rush past the problem to get to the petition, but that sat in the reality of the situation fully and then lifted it entirely to God.

The image of spreading the letter before God is one of the most practically useful pictures of intercessory leadership in scripture. Hezekiah is not spiritualising the problem. He is not pretending that what is real is not real. He is bringing the exact threat, in its full weight and specific detail, to the exact Person who has both the authority and the ability to respond to it. The prayer is not vague. It is not a general request for God's protection. It is a specific presentation of a specific crisis to a specific God.

God's response was equally specific. Through Isaiah, He sent a detailed reply that addressed Sennacherib by name, rebuked his arrogance point by point, and promised that he would not so much as shoot an arrow into Jerusalem. That night, an angel of the Lord put to death 185,000 in the Assyrian camp. Sennacherib retreated to Nineveh and was later killed by his own sons. The letter that had seemed like the end of the story became the occasion for one of the most complete divine interventions in Israel's history.

Every leader will receive a Sennacherib letter. A legal threat. A financial report that seems to foreclose every option. A diagnosis. A betrayal that comes from somewhere you never expected. A competitor who seems to have every advantage. The instinct in those moments is to carry it alone, to manage the information carefully, to project strength you do not have. Hezekiah's example offers a different instinct: take it to the temple. All of it. Unfolded. Held out to God. And then wait for

an answer that only God can give.

Today, if there is a letter in your life, a threat, a fear, a situation that feels overwhelming, take it to God with the same specificity Hezekiah showed. Do not summarise it. Do not package it nicely as though you're trying to impress him. Spread it out before Him in prayer, name everything in it, and ask the God who answered Hezekiah to answer you.

### **Prayer**

Father, I am spreading my letter before you today. All of it, the specific threats, the exact fears, the precise challenges I have been carrying alone. I hold nothing back. You already know. I am simply choosing to bring it to you deliberately rather than manage it myself. Answer as only you can. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 12: Do Not Waste Your Borrowed Time

*“I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the Lord. I will add fifteen years to your life.” — 2 Kings 20:5-6 (NIV)*

**W**hen Isaiah told Hezekiah that he was going to die and should put his house in order, Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and wept. He prayed with raw urgency, reminding God of his faithfulness, and God answered before Isaiah had even left the middle court of the palace. Fifteen more years. A prayer answered so quickly and so completely that it reads almost like a man catching his own death mid-sentence and reversing it. It is one of the most dramatic healing miracles in the Old Testament, and it is rooted in the genuine faith of a man who had governed his life and his kingdom with sincere devotion.

But the fifteen borrowed years contain one of the most sobering lessons in all of royal history. In those extra years, Hezekiah made a mistake that cost generations. When Babylonian envoys came to congratulate him on his recovery, he showed them everything: all the silver and gold, the spices and fine olive oil, his entire armory, and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them. Isaiah came to him afterward and told him plainly that everything he had shown the Babylonians would one day be carried off to Babylon, including his own descendants.

Hezekiah's response to that prophecy is jarring in its complacency. He essentially said: the word of the Lord is good, since there will be peace and security in my days. He was relieved that the consequences would fall after him rather than during him. In the extra years that grace had given him, he produced a son named Manasseh, who became the most wicked king in Judah's history, reigning for fifty-five years and systematically dismantling everything Hezekiah had built. The borrowed time, poorly stewarded, planted seeds that his son would cultivate into a catastrophic harvest.

Every extension of grace comes with extended responsibility. The years you have been given, including the ones that came through prayer, through healing, through a second chance you know you did not deserve, are not a bonus round to spend on your own comfort. They are an investment God has made in what He intends to produce through you. The leader who survives a crisis by grace and then uses the survival to show off their treasures to the wrong people has misunderstood what they were saved for.

The question is not whether God will answer your prayers for

extension and restoration. He does. The question is what you do with what He extends. Hezekiah was a great king in many respects, but his final chapter reveals that even the best leaders can squander their later seasons through a combination of pride and a quiet narrowing of vision to what happens in their own lifetime.

Today, think about what God has restored or extended in your life in recent years, a recovery, a renewed relationship, a second chance at something you thought was over. Ask honestly: am I stewarding this extension faithfully, or am I spending it on something that will not outlast my own comfort? Borrowed time is a gift, but it is also a question: what will you do with it?

### **Prayer**

Father, I do not want to waste the time you have given me, the seasons of extension and restoration, on things that will not outlast my own comfort. Help me to steward every borrowed day with the seriousness of someone who understands that time is a gift with a purpose. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 13: The Throne Sulking Over a Vineyard

*“So Ahab went home, sullen and angry because Naboth the Jezreelite had said, ‘I will not give you the inheritance of my ancestors.’ He lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat.” — 1 Kings 21:4 (NIV)*

**H**e was the king of Israel, the most powerful man in the northern kingdom, commanding armies and controlling the economy of an entire nation. And he was lying on his bed refusing to eat because a farmer would not sell him a vegetable garden. The scene is almost comic in its absurdity, except that it is also deeply revelatory. You learn who a leader really is not in the moments of greatest challenge but in the moments of petty frustration. Ahab’s response to a small denial exposed the profound poverty of his inner governance.

Naboth’s refusal was both legal and principled. Under Mosaic law, ancestral land was not simply property to be sold at will.

It was a family inheritance tied to identity, to provision, to the covenant relationship between God and His people. When Naboth said his inheritance was not for sale, he was not being obstinate. He was being faithful to the law of God. Ahab, as king, should have known this. He did know this. His sulking was not the confusion of a man who did not understand the situation. It was the emotional collapse of a man who could not accept not getting what he wanted.

The leader who cannot govern their own desires will eventually allow those desires to govern them in ways that destroy others. Ahab's unmanaged covetousness created the space for Jezebel to move into with her murder plot. He did not plan Naboth's death. He simply created the conditions for it by refusing to discipline his own emotional response to disappointment. Leaders who throw adult tantrums, who sulk, who withdraw, who become punitive when they do not get their way, are not just temperamentally unpleasant. They are dangerous. Their ungovernance becomes the environment in which the worst decisions get made.

Proverbs 16:32 says a person who rules their spirit is greater than one who takes a city. Ahab had taken many cities in his military career. But the one territory he could never conquer was the territory of his own soul. And a king who cannot rule himself will always find that his unruléd self eventually rules his kingdom.

Self-governance is not a personality trait reserved for the especially stoic. It is a spiritual discipline, available to every believer through the power of the Holy Spirit, that must be cultivated deliberately. It is the practice of pausing between stimulus and response. It is the refusal to let momentary emotion make permanent decisions. It is the choice to process

disappointment in ways that do not contaminate the people under your authority. It is, in short, the most basic and the most demanding requirement of every kind of leadership.

Today, reflect honestly on how you handle frustration, denial, and disappointment in your leadership context. Do you sulk? Do you become punitive? Do you withdraw? Do you allow your emotional state to set the atmosphere for everyone around you? The throne of your inner life is the first throne God holds you accountable for. How well are you governing it?

### **Prayer**

Father, I confess the places where I have been more like Ahab than I want to admit. Where I have let disappointment or denial produce responses in me that were beneath who you called me to be. Teach me to rule my spirit. Give me the grace to govern myself before I try to govern anything else. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 14: The Throne Corrupted by What It Allows

*“When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up and went down to take possession of Naboth’s vineyard.” — 1 Kings 21:16 (NIV)*

**H**e did not ask how the vineyard became available. That is the most damning detail in the entire story. Jezebel sent the letters. Jezebel forged the king’s seal. Jezebel arranged the false accusation. Jezebel orchestrated the stoning. And when it was done, she went to Ahab and told him: Naboth is dead, go take the vineyard. He stood up and walked down to claim it. Not a question asked. Meanwhile, an innocent man was murdered and a king walked into his property without bothering to wonder how the obstacle had been removed.

Leadership creates a particular temptation that is rarely discussed: the temptation to benefit from wrongdoing that someone else executes on your behalf. The leader does not

need to be the one who gives the corrupt instruction. They simply need to be the kind of person whose desires create the environment in which others feel licensed to act corruptly for them. Jezebel knew what Ahab wanted. She knew he lacked the courage to get it himself. And she provided the result while insulating him, or so they both thought, from direct culpability.

But God did not insulate him. Elijah was waiting for him in the vineyard. “Have you not murdered a man and seized his property?” God held Ahab fully accountable for what Jezebel had done in his name, with his seal, for his benefit. The leader who benefits from a corrupt action has participated in it, regardless of whether they were in the room when it happened. The environment you create, the desires you communicate, the implicit permissions you issue through your appetites and your silences, all of these shape what those around you feel authorised to do.

Proverbs 29:12 says: “If a ruler listens to lies, all his officials become wicked.” The character of the leader seeps down through the organisation. A leader who turns a blind eye to how results are produced will eventually produce a culture in which the worst results become possible. What you tolerate you tacitly endorse. What you benefit from without questioning you have, in some measure, commissioned. This is why integrity at the top of any sphere of governance is not optional. It sets the moral ceiling for everything beneath it.

Every leader must ask, with regular honesty, not just what decisions they are making directly, but what environment their leadership is creating. What are the people around you willing to do because of what they sense you want? What are they afraid to tell you because of how they have seen you respond to uncomfortable truths? What has been done in your name that

you have been too convenient to question?

Today, examine the culture you are creating in your sphere. Not just what you explicitly permit, but what your desires, your emotional responses, and your silences are implicitly licensing. Integrity is not only about what you do. It is about what you allow your sphere to become.

### **Prayer**

Father, make me the kind of leader whose character sets a ceiling of integrity rather than a floor of compromise. Where my desires have been creating permission for wrongdoing I did not directly commission, convict me and help me change the environment. I want what happens in my sphere to reflect who you are, not what I want. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 15: The Most Wicked King and the Most Surprising Repentance

*“In his distress he sought the favour of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his ancestors.”*  
— 2 Chronicles 33:12 (NIV)

**B**y any biblical measure, Manasseh was the worst king Judah ever produced. He reigned for fifty-five years, the longest reign in Judah’s history, and spent the majority of it systematically dismantling everything his father Hezekiah had built. He reinstalled the high places Hezekiah had demolished. He built altars to Baal and Asherah. He practised sorcery and divination. He installed a carved image in the temple itself. And scripture adds its most chilling indictment in a single phrase: he shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem from end to end. This was not a man who drifted gradually into unfaithfulness. He ran toward it with deliberate, sustained energy for decades.

God spoke to Manasseh and the people, and they paid no attention. So God brought the commanders of the Assyrian army against him. They put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles, and took him to Babylon. And in Babylon, in a foreign prison, in the most reduced and humiliated state imaginable, something broke in Manasseh. He humbled himself greatly before the God of his ancestors. He sought God's favour. He prayed. And God heard him and restored him to Jerusalem and to his kingdom.

The restoration of Manasseh is one of the most theologically unsettling passages in the Old Testament if you come to it with a transactional understanding of grace. He had done too much. He had gone too far. The calculus of justice seemed to demand that a man who had filled a city with innocent blood and desecrated the very temple of God should not simply be restored. And yet he was. Not because the consequences disappeared, his son Amon quickly resumed Manasseh's earlier wickedness, and Judah never fully recovered from the damage of those fifty-five years. But because God's mercy operates on a logic that human accounting cannot contain.

The story of Manasseh is included in scripture, I believe, precisely because no reader should ever feel they have gone too far for grace to reach. The sins you are most ashamed of, the years you wasted, the damage you caused, the trust you broke, none of it places you beyond the reach of a God who restored Manasseh from Babylon. The capacity to humble yourself greatly before God is all that is required, and it is available to anyone at any point in their story.

But Manasseh's story also carries a leader's warning. The decisions you make from your throne have long consequences, even when you personally repent and are personally restored.

Manasseh returned to Jerusalem and tried to undo the damage. He removed the foreign gods and threw the image out of the temple. But the people still sacrificed at the high places. Individual repentance does not automatically reverse the culture a prolonged season of ungodly leadership has produced. Your restoration is real. The consequences you leave behind for others may be longer-lasting.

Today, whether your need is for the courage to repent of something long delayed or the wisdom to take seriously the cultural impact of your leadership, let Manasseh's story speak. No one is too far gone for grace. And no one who has been given grace should underestimate the responsibility that restoration carries.

### **Prayer**

Father, thank you that your mercy reaches further than my worst chapters. Where I have been delaying a humbling I know I owe you, I humble myself now. And where I have been restored, help me to take seriously the responsibility that your grace has given me. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 16: The Throne That Served God Partially

*“Amaziah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, but not wholeheartedly.” — 2 Chronicles 25:2 (NIV)*

**T**hat qualifying phrase, but not wholeheartedly, is one of the most quietly devastating verdicts in scripture. Amaziah did what was right. He followed the law, he executed justice, he even obeyed a prophetic instruction at significant financial cost when told to send a hired Israelite army home before battle. In many external respects, his reign looked like faithfulness. But God’s assessment was not of the external acts. It was of the interior orientation that produced them. The acts were right. The heart was divided.

What divided it became clear in a single moment after one of his genuine military victories. Amaziah defeated the Edomites, a legitimate triumph. Then he brought back their gods, set them up as his own gods, bowed down to them, and burned

sacrifices to them. The gods of the people he had just defeated, whom those gods had demonstrably failed to protect, somehow became objects of worship for the king who had just proved their impotence. No rational theology can explain this. But partial devotion does not operate by theology. It operates by appetite.

When you are only partially committed to God, you are perpetually available to whatever alternative presents itself with sufficient novelty or apparent advantage. Amaziah had not been seduced by something powerful. He had been seduced by something he had defeated. That is the particularly embarrassing nature of partial devotion: it leaves you vulnerable to things that should no longer have any claim on you. Things you have already proven to yourself are inferior. Things that should have no appeal whatsoever to someone with your history of God's faithfulness.

Partial obedience in a leader creates a particular kind of spiritual confusion in those who follow them. They can see the right things being done, which tells them the leader knows what God requires. But they can also see the compromise, which tells them the leader does not fully believe it matters. The mixed message is more corrosive than outright rebellion, because rebellion is at least honest about where it stands. Partial devotion claims the benefits of faithfulness without paying the full cost, and those who observe it learn that negotiated obedience is an acceptable option.

God sent a prophet to Amaziah to confront the idol worship, and the king's response was telling: "Have we appointed you an adviser to the king? Stop! Why be struck down?" He threatened the prophet for bringing the correction. The half-devoted leader rarely receives correction well, precisely because receiving it fully would require choosing a side, and they have built their

entire leadership identity around not being required to choose fully.

Today, ask God with genuine honesty: is there a “but not wholeheartedly” in my life? An area where I am doing the right thing on the outside while maintaining a divided heart on the inside? The invitation is not condemnation. It is the summons to the simplicity and power of a heart that is fully His.

### **Prayer**

Father, I do not want the verdict of "but not wholeheartedly" written over my life. Search me. Show me where my heart is divided. I do not want to give you the performance of obedience without the reality of full surrender. Take all of me today. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 17: When Success Becomes the Most Dangerous Season

*“But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the Lord his God and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense.” — 2 Chronicles 26:16 (NIV)*

**U**zziah’s reign reads like a highlight reel for the first twenty-six verses of 2 Chronicles 26. Military victories on multiple fronts. Agricultural innovation that transformed Judah’s landscape. Fortifications built, towers constructed, a powerful army equipped and trained, military technology developed that was so advanced it gets a specific mention in scripture. His fame spread as far as Egypt. He was celebrated, effective, and genuinely blessed. And then, at the absolute peak of everything, he walked into the temple to do something only priests were permitted to do, and he was struck with leprosy on the spot.

The historian's diagnosis is precise: when he became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. Not during the difficult years. Not during the early seasons of uncertainty when he was still finding his footing and consciously depending on God. The vulnerability came with the success. Pride almost never shows up at the beginning of the journey when you are still clearly in need of help. It shows up at the peak, dressed as confidence, carrying the logic of accumulated achievement, whispering that someone with your track record deserves certain privileges that others do not.

The specific form of Uzziah's pride is worth examining. He did not simply become arrogant in some vague personal way. He crossed a boundary that God had drawn. He entered a space that was not his to enter, performed a function that was not his to perform, because the internal logic of his success had convinced him that his achievement had outgrown the limitations that applied to ordinary people. He was a king, yes. But the role of priest was not for kings. The boundary was not an insult to his greatness. It was a protection of the order that made his greatness possible.

The eighty priests who confronted him in the temple were not being officious. They were being courageous. They stood before the most powerful man in the kingdom and told him he was out of order. Uzziah's response was fury: he raged at the priests while the censer was in his hand, about to complete the act they were warning him against. And as his anger rose, the leprosy appeared on his forehead in full view of everyone. He spent the rest of his life in a separate house, excluded from the temple he had desecrated and from the governance of the kingdom he had built.

I have watched this pattern unfold in ministry more times than

I wish I had. A leader builds something genuine, something that carries real fruit and genuine anointing. Then, at the peak of its effectiveness, they begin to operate outside the boundaries that shaped the success. They become unteachable. They resist accountability. They position themselves above correction. And slowly, sometimes quickly, something that was genuinely from God begins to carry a different atmosphere entirely. The leprosy, in whatever form it takes, eventually shows.

The question for any leader in a season of genuine success is not whether to celebrate what God has done. Celebrate it. It is whether the success has begun to feel like a credential that exempts you from the ordinary requirements of humility, accountability, and submission. If it has, the ceiling you are approaching is not a new level. It is Uzziah's ceiling.

### **Prayer**

Father, protect me from the pride that only appears at the peak. Keep me as dependent on you in my most successful season as I was in my most desperate one. And wherever I have been crossing boundaries that my success has convinced me I no longer need to respect, stop me before the leprosy comes. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 18: The Throne Seized by Violence

*“Pekah son of Remaliah, a chief officer, conspired against him with fifty men of Gilead and assassinated him.” — 2 Kings 15:25 (NIV)*

**P**ekah did not wait to be appointed. He did not develop the qualities that attract a genuine calling. He identified a throne he wanted, removed the person sitting in it, and sat down himself. The method was a sword. The result was a reign of twenty years over Israel, which sounds like a long tenure until you read what those twenty years produced. It was a reign characterised by the same sins of Jeroboam that had defined every faithless king before him, and it ended when another man did to him exactly what he had done to his predecessor. He was assassinated by Hoshea, who then took the throne by the same method Pekah had used to seize it.

Violence breeds violence. Manipulation breeds manipulation. The methods by which you take a throne become the culture of

the throne you take. Pekah's twenty years produced nothing worth reading about beyond the record of his military failures, including the loss of significant Israelite territory to Assyria. He had the position but lacked the foundation, the calling, the character, and the anointing that produce a reign worth inheriting. The sword that got him the seat could not give him the qualities the seat required.

This principle operates with quiet consistency in every domain of leadership. The person who manoeuvres themselves into a leadership role through political skill, strategic relationships, or the deliberate undermining of the person before them may succeed in occupying the position. But they will find that the position produces far less in their hands than it would have in the hands of someone whose appointment was genuine. Anointing follows calling. Authority flows from appointment. You cannot manufacture either through ambition, however sophisticated.

There is also a warning here for those who are legitimately gifted but impatient. Pekah may have had real leadership capacity. The text does not tell us he was incompetent. What it tells us is that he was unwilling to wait. And the willingness to wait, to develop in obscurity, to serve under someone whose seat you may eventually occupy, is not weakness. It is the preparation that makes the seat worth sitting in when you finally arrive at it.

The throne you seize is never quite yours. There is a difference between the position you take and the seat you are given that is felt in the room, even when it cannot always be articulated. People sense whether the leader before them was placed or manoeuvred. They sense whether the authority is genuine or performed. And they respond accordingly, with either the trust that enables genuine leadership or the compliance that merely manages its absence.

Today, reflect on how you arrived at the leadership positions you currently hold. And more importantly, how you are pursuing the ones you do not yet have. Is the path you are walking one that God can bless? Are you waiting in ways that develop you or striving in ways that will ultimately undermine what you are trying to build?

**Prayer**

Father, guard me from the ambition that reaches for what you have not yet given me and the impatience that refuses to be shaped by the waiting. I want only the thrones you appoint me to, taken in your timing, through your process. What I seize by force I cannot sustain by grace. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 19: When Failure Deepens the Wrong Direction

*“In his time of trouble King Ahaz became even more unfaithful to the Lord.” — 2 Chronicles 28:22 (NIV)*

**T**hat phrase is one of the most tragic in all of Kings and Chronicles: even more unfaithful. Ahaz had already dismantled the worship of God in Jerusalem before the crisis arrived. He had been sacrificing to the gods of Damascus, burning his own children in the fire as an offering to Baal, closing the doors of the temple, and setting up altars at every street corner in Jerusalem. Then God allowed military defeats to come, Judah was overpowered from multiple directions simultaneously, and the response of Ahaz to the discipline of God was to intensify the behaviour that had produced it. He doubled down on the wrong direction.

This is one of the most baffling but also most human responses to the consequences of poor governance: when the strategy is

clearly failing, rather than reconsidering the strategy, double its intensity. Ahaz saw the same gods of Damascus who had defeated him and concluded that since they had been powerful enough to defeat him, they must be worth worshipping. He installed their altar in the temple, moved God's altar aside to make room, and gave the new altar the place of honour. The logic was upside down. But when a heart is hardened enough, it can make the inversion feel like wisdom.

Every leader will face failure. Strategies fail. Markets shift. Ministries go through difficult seasons. Relationships fracture. The question that defines the trajectory of a leader's life is not whether failure will come but what they do when it arrives. Failure can be an invitation to return: to examine what has been done, to hear the voices that were carrying something true, to humble the heart and recalibrate. Or it can be an occasion for the hardening that drives a person deeper into what was already not working.

The presence of consequence is not always discipline. But it is always worth asking, in the honest quiet of prayer, whether God is trying to redirect you through what you are experiencing. The leaders who grow through failure are the ones willing to sit with that question long enough to hear an honest answer. The leaders who deepen their dysfunction through failure are the ones who arrive at consequence already certain that the problem lies elsewhere.

Ahaz's story ends without repentance. He died in the same trajectory he had chosen and was not even buried in the royal tombs of Jerusalem, a final, quietly devastating verdict. His chapter closes not with a dramatic fall but with a slow, deliberate, sustained motion away from God that failure only accelerated. He is a cautionary portrait of what happens when the instinct

to protect the self overrides every other instinct, including the instinct to be honest about what is actually happening.

Today, if there is an area of your leadership where the same approach has been producing the same poor results for an extended season, resist the instinct to simply apply more of what has not been working. Bring the failure honestly to God and ask: is this an invitation to return? What would it mean to take the road home from here?

### **Prayer**

Father, when failure comes, let it do its redemptive work in me rather than hardening me further in the wrong direction. I do not want to be Ahaz, doubling down on what is clearly not working because I am too proud or too afraid to turn around. Give me the honesty and the courage to hear what failure might be saying. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 20: The Throne Shaped by the Word

*“When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes.” — 2 Kings 22:11 (NIV)*

**H**e was twenty-six years old when his servants found the lost Book of the Law during the temple restoration. By then he had already been king for eighteen years, having ascended to the throne at eight. He had spent his teenage years seeking God in an environment where the written word of God had been so thoroughly lost that it took a building project to uncover it. He was already on the right track. He was already moving in the right direction. And then the word arrived. And what the word did to him in a single reading revealed the difference between a good heart and a thoroughly transformed one.

He tore his robes. In the ancient Near East, that was not a dramatic gesture for the cameras. It was the visible, physical

expression of a soul that has been undone by what it has encountered. Josiah heard the word of God read aloud, recognised immediately how far the nation had drifted from it, and the gap between what God required and what had been practised for generations broke him open. He did not move to damage control. He did not reassure his officials that things were not as bad as they sounded. He wept, he humbled himself, and he called for the word to be consulted further.

What follows is one of the most comprehensive spiritual reforms in Israel's history: the covenant renewed publicly, the Passover reinstated on a scale not seen since the days of Samuel, the high places demolished, the Asherah poles burned, the mediums and spiritists expelled. The word that landed in a tender heart produced a national reformation. One encounter with scripture, received without defensiveness and acted on without delay, rearranged the entire agenda of a kingdom.

The contrast with the king who preceded Josiah is stark. Manasseh had the same access to God's requirements. The law had not been lost in his day. He simply chose to ignore it and then to actively suppress it. Josiah's power was not that he was given something Manasseh was denied. It was that when the word came, he received it without protecting himself from its implications. He let it do its work. A heart that is genuinely open to scripture is a dangerous thing in the best possible sense: it cannot encounter God's word without being changed by it.

For every leader in any sphere, the relationship with scripture is not peripheral to the quality of the governance. It is central to it. The word of God is not primarily a source of inspiration for leadership principles. It is the living, active, discerning voice of the God who holds your throne in trust and who will call you to account for how you governed it. Leaders who read it casually,

selectively, or primarily for ammunition to use in managing others will miss most of what it is doing. Leaders who come to it as Josiah came to it, ready to be broken and redirected, will find that it reshapes everything.

Today, come to scripture with Josiah's posture rather than a researcher's. Do not just read for information. Read with the question: what needs to change in me and in how I govern my sphere because of what I am reading? And be willing, when the tearing of robes is called for, to tear them.

### **Prayer**

Father, give me Josiah's posture before your word. Not a reader who manages the implications but one who lets scripture do its full, uncomfortable, reforming work. Wherever the word reveals a gap between what you require and how I have been living, let it break me open rather than make me defensive. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 21: Revival That Does Not Stay Personal

*“The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord, to follow the Lord and keep his commands, statutes and decrees with all his heart and all his soul. Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant.” — 2 Kings 23:3 (NIV)*

**J**osiah could have kept the reformation private. He had already been personally broken by the word, already humbled himself before God, already received a prophetic word of assurance that the coming judgment would not fall in his lifetime. He had enough personal peace to simply govern well and let the national situation run its course. Instead, he gathered all the people of Jerusalem, all the elders of Judah, all the priests and prophets, every person in the city, great and small, and he stood before them at the temple pillar and read the entire book of the covenant to them himself. Then he renewed

the covenant publicly and invited every person present to do the same.

This is the moment that distinguishes great leadership from merely personal faithfulness. A good person manages their own walk with God well. A great leader creates conditions in which those they lead have the opportunity to encounter God alongside them. Josiah's personal reformation was genuine and important. But his leadership reformation, the extension of what had happened in him into the public life of the nation, is what secured his legacy as the king about whom scripture says there was none like him who turned to the Lord with all his heart and soul and strength.

Think of the leaders in every domain who have understood this principle. The parent who does not simply practise private faith but creates a home culture in which faith is openly discussed, lived out, and renewed at regular intervals. The pastor who does not merely preach transformation but creates intentional structures in which the community can be formed together. The business leader who does not simply govern with personal integrity but builds a team culture in which integrity is a shared expectation rather than a private standard. In each case, the leader's personal encounter with what is true becomes the environment in which others can encounter it too.

The public reading of the covenant and the communal renewal that followed it is also a reminder that some things need to be said out loud, in community, with witnesses. The private decision, however sincere, does not carry the same weight as the public commitment made in the presence of those who will hold you to it. Josiah could have renewed the covenant alone in his private chambers. He chose the most public setting available, with every person in the city standing before him as he made

and invited the commitment. The accountability of community was not incidental to the reform. It was part of the mechanism.

The revival that changed Judah began with one man who could not read the word without being broken by it. But it reached its full expression only when that one man stood up and made what had happened privately into something that could happen publicly. Personal renewal is the seed. Leadership that creates space for communal renewal is the harvest.

Today, ask yourself: what has God been doing in me privately that needs to be brought into my sphere of leadership publicly? Not as a performance or a position statement, but as an invitation for those you govern to encounter the same thing. The throne is not just a platform for your decisions. It is a platform for your witness.

### **Prayer**

Father, let what you do in me privately find its way into my sphere of leadership publicly. I do not want to hold reformation to myself while those I lead remain unchanged. Make me the kind of leader whose encounter with you creates space for others to encounter you too. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 22: The Quiet King Who Simply Walked Rightly

*“Jotham grew powerful because he walked steadily before the Lord his God.” — 2 Chronicles 27:6 (NIV)*

**J**otham gets four verses. That is almost nothing by royal standards. No dramatic military victory that takes a chapter to recount. No revival that reshapes the nation. No prophetic confrontation that enters the biblical record. He built some things, he won one battle, he required tribute from his enemies, and he walked steadily before the Lord his God. Four verses. And the summary verdict: he grew powerful.

The word translated steadily in that verse carries the sense of ordered movement, of a life that had a consistent, unwavering direction. Jotham did not oscillate between faithfulness and compromise the way so many of his predecessors had. He did not have brilliant seasons interrupted by spectacular failures. He simply walked: steady, consistent, ordered, faithful, day

after day, year after year, for sixteen years, without a single episode dramatic enough to make the expanded record. And God called that growing powerful.

In an era obsessed with visibility and scale, Jotham's four verses are a counter-cultural statement about what God considers significant. We have largely absorbed the world's metrics into our assessment of leadership faithfulness. We equate impact with size, with documented results, with the kind of story that makes a compelling testimony or fills a conference session. By those metrics, Jotham would not make many lists. But by God's metric, the one that measures the consistency of the walk rather than the drama of the chapter, Jotham is commended in a way that many more celebrated kings are not.

There is a particular kind of leadership that does not make headlines but makes culture. It is the leadership of the parent who shows up consistently, day after day, without a dramatic breakthrough to point to, and whose children grow up with a settled sense of what faithfulness looks like because they have watched it for eighteen years. It is the leadership of the cell group leader who does not plant a megachurch but shepherds the same fifteen people with care and integrity for a decade, and those fifteen people become the most stable and fruitful members of the larger community. It is the leadership of the manager who never becomes CEO but whose team consistently outperforms because they trust the environment they work in.

The text also says that the people continued their corrupt practices during Jotham's reign, which means his faithfulness did not produce the national transformation a leader of his quality might have hoped to produce. But scripture does not hold him responsible for what the people did with the environment he provided. He walked steadily. That was his assignment. What

the people did with it was between them and God. Faithful leadership does not guarantee the response of those you lead. It guarantees something more important: the integrity of who you were in the season you were given.

Today, release the pressure to be dramatic and simply be faithful. Ask God to help you walk steadily in the specific sphere He has given you, without comparison to anyone else's chapter, without the need for a story big enough to tell. Four verses of steady faithfulness may be worth more in God's economy than forty verses of spectacular inconsistency.

### **Prayer**

Father, give me Jotham's gift: the capacity to walk steadily before you without needing the walking to be dramatic. Help me to release the pressure of visible impact and simply be faithful in the sphere you have given me, day after ordinary day, until the ordinary days accumulate into a life worth reading about. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 23: Strike Until God Says Stop

*“The man of God was angry with him and said, ‘You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times.’” — 2 Kings 13:19 (NIV)*

**E**lisha was dying. Jehoash, king of Israel, came to him weeping, using the same words Elisha himself had used when Elijah was taken: “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!” It was a genuine display of grief. Elisha, even in his final illness, had one more instruction to give. He told the king to take his bow and shoot an arrow out of the window. He placed his hands over the king’s hands as he shot. Then he told him to take the arrows and strike the ground. Jehoash struck three times and stopped. And the dying prophet, from his bed, was furious.

There is no indication in the text that God gave Jehoash a specific number of strikes to aim for. Elisha simply told him to

strike. And Jehoash, perhaps embarrassed to be beating arrows against the floor beside a dying man's bed, perhaps uncertain of what he was doing, perhaps simply lacking the fervency to continue past the point where it started to feel strange, stopped at three. He did enough to be obedient but not enough to be effective. He showed up but held back. And the prophet told him plainly what the cost of that holding back would be: a partial victory instead of a complete one.

The lesson of the arrows is one of the most searingly practical in the entire account of Israel's kings. God had not limited the victory to three. Jehoash had limited it himself, with his own measured, self-conscious, restrained engagement of the instruction. The ceiling of the outcome was set not by what God was willing to give but by how fully the king was willing to engage. Three strikes of half-hearted commitment produced three battles of partial success. The enemy survived because the king stopped.

I have watched this dynamic play out in prayer more times than I can count. Someone receives a clear sense that they are to pray persistently about something, and they pray, genuinely, for a while. Then it starts to feel repetitive. Or results are slow. Or the emotional urgency of the initial burden fades. And they stop at three. Not because God said stop. Not because the answer came. Simply because the instinct to continue was not matched by the fervency required to sustain it. And the victory that was available remains partial.

Elisha's anger was not cruelty from a dying man. It was the grief of a prophet watching a leader settle for less than God had made available. There is something in God that is equally grieved when we bring less than our whole heart to the instructions He gives us. Not because He needs our enthusiasm to accomplish

His purposes, but because our engagement is itself an expression of our faith, and thin engagement produces thin outcomes not because God is stingy but because we are timid.

Today, identify something in your life or leadership that you have been engaging at three strikes when God has not yet said stop. Return to it. Strike again. And again. Keep going until God gives the answer, not until you run out of fervency.

### **Prayer**

Father, forgive me for stopping at three. For the prayers I abandoned before the answer came, for the instructions I engaged partially, for the fervency I let cool before the victory arrived. I pick up the arrows again today. Tell me when to stop. Until then, I strike. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 24: The Year of Three Kings: Ambition Without Calling

*“Zechariah son of Jeroboam succeeded him as king and reigned in Samaria six months.” — 2 Kings 15:8 (NIV)*

**I**n a single year, the northern kingdom of Israel had three kings. Zechariah reigned six months before Shallum conspired against him and killed him in public. Shallum reigned one month before Menahem conspired against him and killed him. Menahem, who secured his reign by a campaign of brutality so extreme that scripture records the detail of pregnant women being ripped open in the towns that refused to open their gates to him, paid a thousand talents of silver to the Assyrian king to buy the stability that his violent takeover could not organically produce. It is one of the darkest and most chaotic passages in all of Kings.

What is most striking about this cascade of thrones is not the violence, appalling as it is, but the motivation behind it. Each

man who seized the throne wanted the position without the preparation, the title without the formation, the seat without the season that would have made the seat sustainable. And each throne taken in that spirit became a liability the moment it was obtained. Shallum's one month of power is among the shortest reigns in Israel's history. He had enough ambition to kill for the throne and not enough substance to hold it for thirty days.

The contrast with leaders who received their thrones through God's appointment could not be sharper. Hezekiah, who was appointed by birth and prepared by God, reigned twenty-nine years and left a legacy worth reading about in three separate books of scripture. Josiah, appointed at eight and prepared through a decade of seeking God, reigned thirty-one years and produced the most significant religious reformation in Judah's history. The length and the fruitfulness of a reign are not primarily functions of the leader's talent. They are functions of whether the throne was given or taken, and whether the leader was prepared or merely eager.

Ambition is not inherently wrong. The desire to lead, to influence, to build something significant is not a sin. What makes it dangerous is when it becomes disconnected from calling, from the patient process of formation, from the willingness to serve before leading and to be shaped before being deployed. Ambition without calling produces Shallum: one month of power and a body in the street. Calling without ambition produces Jotham: four quiet verses of steady faithfulness that God calls growing powerful.

In every sphere of governance, the leaders who do the most lasting damage are rarely the openly incompetent. They are the prematurely positioned: people with genuine gifts who arrived at the throne before the throne arrived in them, who had the

capacity to take the seat but had not yet developed the character to hold it. The position revealed what the formation had not yet completed.

Today, examine your relationship with the leadership positions you do not yet hold. Is the desire to arrive in them rooted in what you want to do for God, or what you want God to do for you? Are you willing to serve faithfully in your current sphere while God prepares you for the next one? The throne that God gives is always more stable than the one you seize.

### **Prayer**

Father, purify my ambition. Where it is ahead of your appointment, slow me down. Where it has become disconnected from calling and character, realign it. I want only what you give me, taken in your timing, after your preparation. I will serve faithfully in what I have until you open what I do not yet have. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 25: The Most Important Throne: The One Within

*“Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.” — Proverbs 16:32 (NIV)*

**W**e have spent three and a half weeks in the palace, walking through the reigns of kings whose stories have held up mirrors to every kind of leadership. We have seen courage and cowardice, wisdom and foolishness, genuine faith and spectacular compromise. But the thread that runs beneath every story, the pattern that connects every failure and commends every success, is not primarily about external leadership at all. It is about the kingdom within.

Every king who failed externally first failed internally. Ahab could not control his covetousness and it created the space for Naboth's murder. Uzziah could not control his pride and it cost him the throne he had spent a lifetime building. Amaziah could

not unify his interior life around a single allegiance and the division expressed itself in idol worship. Rehoboam could not manage his ego and it destroyed the unified kingdom in three days. In each case, the external failure was not the root. It was the fruit. The root was a throne within that had been poorly governed.

Proverbs 16:32 tells us that a person who rules their spirit is greater than one who takes a city. This is not a diminishment of military achievement. In the ancient world, taking a city was the highest measure of power and capability. What the proverb is saying is that the conquest of the inner life requires a greater and more sustained discipline than any external conquest. The city eventually falls or it does not. The inner life requires governance every single day, in every moment of provocation, disappointment, temptation, and success. It never becomes automatic. It never reaches a point where you can stop paying attention.

And Proverbs 25:28 adds the consequence of its absence: like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control. A city without walls is not merely inconvenient. It is exposed to every threat, every attack, and every intrusion that wishes to enter. The leader who has not developed the walls of self-governance is similarly exposed: to temptation, to manipulation, to the slow erosion that comes when every impulse is given immediate expression and every desire is treated as a legitimate claim on action.

The good news in all of this is that the fruit of the Spirit includes self-control (Galatians 5:23). The governance of the inner life is not a project of willpower alone. It is the natural outcome of yielding to the Spirit of God and allowing Him to form in you what you cannot produce in yourself. Every king we

have studied governed in their own strength. The believer has access to something no ancient king possessed: the indwelling Spirit of God, who is more than capable of producing in you the inner governance that produces lasting outer fruit.

Today, sit with the question that this entire month has been building toward: how well are you governing the throne within? Not as a condemnation, but as an honest inventory. Your patience. Your emotional responses under pressure. The private thoughts you entertain. The desires you manage or fail to manage. The way you respond when you do not get what you want. This is the most important throne in your life. And it is the one that determines the character of everything else you govern.

### **Prayer**

Father, I submit the throne of my inner life to you today. I cannot govern it well in my own strength, and I have tried. Fill me with your Spirit and produce in me the self-control, the patience, and the inner order that no external achievement can substitute for. Rule in me so I can rule well in everything you have given me. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 26: The Throne Won by a Sermon

*“The men of Judah cried out to God, and because they cried out, God routed Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.” — 2 Chronicles 13:15 (NIV)*

**A**bijah was outnumbered two to one. The army of Jeroboam had 800,000 soldiers. Abijah had 400,000. Before a single sword was drawn, Jeroboam had also deployed 200,000 men to surround Judah from behind while negotiations appeared to be taking place from the front. It was an ambush. Judah was in the middle of it before they realised what was happening. By every visible measure, the situation was beyond recovery.

But before the battle, Abijah had climbed a mountain and preached. Not a battle strategy. Not a negotiation. A sermon. He stood on Mount Zemaraim and declared to Jeroboam and all Israel the theological reality of what they were about to do: they were fighting against the kingdom of the Lord, held by the

descendants of David, served by the priests of God, and sustained by the God of the covenant. He held up before them the gold calves and the unlawful priests as evidence of their spiritual bankruptcy. He called them back to what they had abandoned. He declared who was on whose side before the battle began.

Then, surrounded and outnumbered, the men of Judah cried out to the Lord, the priests sounded the trumpets, they raised the war cry, and God routed Jeroboam before them. The ambush became a rout. The army that had been surrounded became the pursuing force. Half a million soldiers fell that day, and Judah prevailed because they cried out to God.

The sequence is instructive for every leader: declaration, then petition, then victory. Abijah did not begin with fear. He began with the word of God spoken confidently over the situation. He established the theological framework of the conflict before he engaged in the military one. He reminded both armies, including his own, of the ultimate reality that the visible circumstances could not obscure. And that declaration, received in faith by the men of Judah and expressed in a corporate cry to God, became the mechanism of an impossible victory.

Every leader has moments when the situation around them is objectively overwhelming, when the numbers do not add up, when the opposition is greater and the resources are fewer and the position feels surrounded. The instinct in those moments is to manage the optics, to appear more confident than you feel, to project a certainty you do not have. Abijah's example offers a different instinct: climb the mountain and preach the word. Declare what is true. Remind yourself and those around you of the theological reality that overrides the visible one. And then cry out to the God who routes enemies that numbers could not.

Today, identify a situation in your sphere where you need to

declare before you petition. Where the word of God needs to be spoken out loud over the reality you are facing, before you bring your requests. Let the declaration precede the petition, and watch what the combination produces.

**Prayer**

Father, give me Abijah's courage to declare your word over impossible odds before I ask for your intervention. Let me establish the spiritual reality of who you are and what you have promised before I engage with what the circumstances appear to say. I declare today: the battle is yours. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 27: Even the Best Leaders Have a Blind Spot

*“Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Because of this, the wrath of the Lord is on you.” — 2 Chronicles 19:2 (NIV)*

**J**ehoshaphat was one of the finest kings Judah ever produced. He sought the Lord in the early years of his reign with genuine hunger. He sent teachers throughout Judah to instruct the people in the law of God. He established justice systems that were genuinely impartial and God-honouring. He prayed one of the most beautiful and honest prayers of corporate intercession in the Old Testament. And he formed a marriage alliance between his son and the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

That alliance, sealed through a family marriage, drew Jehoshaphat into a series of entanglements with Ahab and with the house of Ahab that cost him repeatedly. He went with Ahab to battle at Ramoth Gilead despite the clear word of the prophet

Micaiah that the venture was doomed. He very nearly died on that battlefield, saved only when the enemy realised he was not Ahab and broke off their pursuit. He was confronted by the prophet Jehu when he returned and told plainly that the alliance had provoked God's anger. And then, astonishingly, he later allied himself with Ahab's son Ahaziah for a shipping venture. The prophet Eliezer told him the partnership would fail. The ships were wrecked.

Why did a man of Jehoshaphat's genuine spiritual quality keep making the same relational mistake? The text does not give us a detailed psychological analysis, but the pattern suggests something about the particular vulnerability of the relationally gifted leader: the desire to be liked, to find common ground, to build bridges across divides, can, when left unguarded, slide into alliances that God has not sanctioned. Jehoshaphat had a generous spirit. Generosity is a gift. But generosity without discernment will keep finding itself in the same difficult room with the same wrong people.

Every leader has a blind spot. The quality of a leader's self-awareness is often determined by how honest they are about where that blind spot is located. Jehoshaphat's was relational: his inclination toward alliance, harmony, and connection became the consistent crack in an otherwise remarkable leadership record. His kingdom and his reputation survived his blind spot, just barely, but they were diminished by it in ways that a more guarded leader might have avoided.

The question is not whether you have a blind spot. You do. Every leader does. The question is whether you know where it is and whether you have people around you who are permitted to speak to it. Jehoshaphat had the prophets. They told him the truth every time. He heard them and then went back to the same

patterns. The availability of honest counsel and the willingness to receive it are not the same thing.

Today, ask God to show you your relational blind spot. Where your genuine strengths, whether generosity, loyalty, the desire for harmony, or the gift of building bridges, become the door through which problematic alliances enter. And then ask whether you are hearing the Micaiahs in your life, or politely setting them aside.

### **Prayer**

Father, show me my blind spot. The place where my genuine strength becomes my consistent vulnerability. And give me the honesty to receive what the prophets in my life are saying about it, even when what they say disrupts an alliance I have invested in. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 28: When a Throne Ends a Nation

*“All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the Lord their God.” — 2 Kings 17:7 (NIV)*

**H**oshea was Israel’s last king. Under his reign, the Assyrian king Shalmaneser invaded, besieged Samaria for three years, captured it, and deported the Israelites to Assyria. The northern kingdom of Israel, which had existed for over two centuries and had produced nineteen kings across nine dynasties, was gone. The people scattered. The land resettled with foreigners. The ten tribes never returned from captivity. It was the end of everything.

The historian of Kings does not rush past this moment. He stops, steps back from the narrative, and gives us one of the longest single explanations of cause and effect in the entire book. This happened because. Not because Assyria was more powerful, though it was. Not because of geopolitical forces beyond anyone’s control, though those existed too. Because the

Israelites had sinned against the Lord their God. Because they had followed the practices of the nations. Because they had built high places and set up sacred stones and Asherah poles. Because, generation after generation, they had rejected the covenant and refused to listen to the prophets God sent to warn them.

And then the text adds a detail that carries the specific weight of a leadership indictment: they followed the sinful example of Jeroboam who had caused Israel to sin, and they did not turn away from it. Jeroboam's golden calves, erected in the first year of the divided kingdom, produced a current of spiritual dysfunction that ran through every subsequent reign in Israel. One leader's fear-driven compromise, in the first generation of the nation's existence, created a template of unfaithfulness that no subsequent king fully dismantled. And it eventually produced a generation that God gave over to the consequences of what their leaders had consistently chosen.

This is the most sobering truth in all of the palace lessons: leadership failure never costs only the leader. It costs the people. It costs the generation that inherits what you built, or what you failed to build, or what you actively dismantled. The twenty years of Pekah's violent, faithless reign were twenty years of spiritual erosion for a people who deserved better. The fifty-five years of Manasseh's wickedness were fifty-five years of a nation being led away from God by the person who was supposed to lead them toward Him.

Every throne you occupy has people within its orbit who will be shaped by how you govern it, for better or for worse, in ways that will outlast your tenure. The home you govern will produce children who carry the culture of that home into adulthood. The team you lead will carry the standards you established into the next organization they join. The church you shepherd will reflect

the theology and the character of its leadership for a generation after the leader is gone. The reach of your governance always extends further than your visibility.

Today, let the weight of that responsibility land not as condemnation but as clarifying urgency. The people within your sphere of influence deserve a leader who takes seriously what it means to govern them faithfully. You are not just managing a role. You are shaping a culture. And cultures outlast the leaders who create them.

### **Prayer**

Father, help me to feel the weight of what my leadership costs those who live within its orbit. I do not want to be the Jeroboam whose patterns are still being felt generations later. Sober me with the responsibility and then sustain me with your grace to govern faithfully for the sake of those who are counting on me. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 29: The Fear of Man: The Last King of Judah

*“King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “I am afraid of the Jews who have gone over to the Babylonians, for the Babylonians may hand me over to them and they will mistreat me” — Jeremiah 38:19 (NIV)*

**J**eremiah gave Zedekiah the clearest, most specific leadership counsel in the entire book: surrender to Babylon, and you and the city will live. Resist, and Jerusalem will be burned. Zedekiah knew Jeremiah was a genuine prophet. He had been consulting him in secret for months, sneaking him out of prison for private conversations because he trusted what Jeremiah said but could not be seen publicly agreeing with him. The knowledge was there. The trust was there. The word from God was there. What was not there was the courage to act on it.

His stated reason for not obeying the word of God is both honest and devastating: he was afraid. Not of Babylon, primarily,

though Babylon was terrifying. He was afraid of the Judeans who had already defected to the Babylonians and what they might do to him if he surrendered. He was afraid of what people thought. He was afraid of perception. He had the word of God on one side and the fear of human opinion on the other, and he chose the fear. Jerusalem fell. The temple was burned. His sons were killed before his eyes, and then his eyes were put out, and he was led in chains to Babylon. He chose the fear and received the exact outcome the word had warned him against.

The fear of man is one of the most reliably destructive forces in leadership history. Proverbs 29:25 calls it a snare: “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.” A snare does not announce itself. It looks like the ground. You are moving naturally and then suddenly you are caught, and the more you struggle to free yourself through further people-pleasing and image management, the deeper the trap closes.

The leader who governs primarily to be liked will always find themselves in Zedekiah’s position: knowing what the right decision is, having access to the word of God, and finding that the fear of how people will respond is louder than the voice of what is true. In small decisions, this produces compromised standards and a reputation for inconsistency. In large decisions, it produces the kind of catastrophic failure that Zedekiah’s reign represents: the complete collapse of everything because the leader would not do the hard right thing when the hard right thing was still available to them.

Zedekiah’s tragedy is compounded by the fact that the window of obedience was open right up until the moment of the final Babylonian assault. It was not too late until it was too late. He had every opportunity and surrendered every one of them to

the fear of what people would think. And in the end, the very people whose opinion he feared were irrelevant to the outcome. Babylon came regardless. The only difference was whether he and the city survived it.

Today, name the fear of man that is operating in your leadership. The decision you know is right that you have not made because you are afraid of how it will be received. The standard you know should be held that you have let slide because enforcing it would make you unpopular. The word you know should be spoken that you have swallowed because the timing feels uncomfortable. The window is still open. Make the decision before it closes.

### **Prayer**

Father, deliver me from the snare of fearing what people think more than what you say. Where I have been Zedekiah, knowing the right thing and choosing the popular thing, convict me and give me courage. I want to govern from the fear of God rather than the fear of man. In Jesus' name, amen.

## June 30: Your Throne: The Lesson from the Palace

*“You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.” — Revelation 5:10 (NIV)*

**W**e have been in the palace for thirty days. We have sat with kings who tore their robes in genuine repentance and kings who threw prophets in prison for telling the truth. We have watched thrones won by courage and lost by pride, sustained by prayer and corrupted by alliance, inherited through faithfulness and seized through violence. We have seen what happens when a leader governs from the fear of God and what happens when they govern from the fear of man. And underneath every story, the same thread has been running: how you govern the sphere God gave you matters, profoundly, permanently, and well beyond what you can see.

Revelation 5:10 is the final frame through which all of it must

be understood. God has made us, through the blood of Christ, a kingdom and priests to serve Him. And we will reign on the earth. This is not metaphor. It is destiny. The governance God built into human beings from the beginning, the dominion of Genesis 1:28, the crown of Psalm 8, was not cancelled by the fall. It was redeemed by the cross. The believer in Christ is a royal-priestly being, already in the process of learning to govern in a way that will one day find its complete expression in the new creation.

Everything you govern now is practice. The home. The team. The business. The classroom. The cell group. The inner life. All of it is the training ground of a person who is destined to reign with Christ in the fullness of God's coming kingdom. This does not make the current stakes smaller. It makes them infinitely larger. The faithfulness you build in the small throne is the preparation for the larger one. The character you develop in the Tuesday morning crisis is the character you will carry into eternity. The way you handle the vineyard is connected to whether you will ever be trusted with a city.

The lesson from the palace is not a leadership framework or a governance model. It is a vision of what human beings were made for and what, through Christ, they are being restored toward. Every king we studied, the faithful ones and the failed ones, was operating with a fraction of what you now carry: the indwelling Spirit of God, the completed word of God, the interceding presence of Christ at the right hand of the Father, the declared righteousness of the cross. They governed with so much less. And some of them governed so much better than most of us with so much more.

Matthew 25:21 is the word every leader is ultimately working toward: "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been

faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.” Not: well done, you governed a large sphere. Not: well done, you produced impressive results. Well done, you were faithful. Over what was given. In the season appointed. With the resources provided. The King is not measuring the size of your throne. He is measuring the quality of your stewardship of it.

Today, on the last day of June, receive afresh the crown that God placed on your head before you did anything to deserve it. Take seriously the throne He has given you, however small it appears. Govern it with Jehoshaphat’s prayer, Hezekiah’s intercession, Josiah’s responsiveness to the word, Jotham’s quiet faithfulness, and above all, the humility of someone who knows that the King of kings is watching, and that He rewards faithfulness. Reign well. The King is coming.

### **Prayer**

Father, I receive the crown you placed on my head and the throne you have given me to govern. I want to hear 'well done' at the end of my reign, not because I governed a large sphere but because I governed mine faithfully. Teach me everything I need to reign well. I give you my throne. In Jesus' name, amen.