



An 8-week Bible study in 1-2 Kings and 1-2 Chronicles that leads to repentance, renewal, and revival. You, too, will fight the Lord's battles, topple the idols that claw at our hearts, and bring reformation to God's people. Let the legacy of the godly kings be yours as well!

Interested in the whole book?
Select your preferred book seller:

MOODY PUBLISHERS 

APPLE BOOKS



AMAZON



TARGET



LIFEWAY



WALMART



GOOGLE PLAY



CHRISTIANBOOK.COM 

BARNES & NOBLE



CONTENTS

Introduction: An Invitation to Faithful Living	8
How to Make the Most of This Study	9
Week One: Setting the Stage—Chronicles of the Kings Overview	12
Week Two: Reviving Obedience—King Asa and King Jehoshaphat	42
Week Three: Renewing Trust—King Joash	74
Week Four: Receiving Wisdom—King Amaziah	96
Week Five: Relentless Faith—King Uzziah and King Jotham	128
Week Six: Reforming Prayer—King Hezekiah	158
Week Seven: Rebuilding Worship—King Josiah	186
Week Eight: Remembering Heritage—My Live Bold Legacy Covenant	218
7 Pillars for Faithful Living and Lasting Influence	230
Kings Genealogy Timeline with Prophets	232
Map of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms	234
Leader’s Guide	235
Acknowledgments	245
Notes	247



KING ASA AND KING JEHOSHAPHAT

REVIVING OBEDIENCE

*Asa — Healing or Cure*¹

*Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD,
as David his father had done.*

1 KINGS 15:11

*Jehoshaphat — Jehovah has judged*²

*He walked in all the way of Asa his father. He did not turn aside from it,
doing what was right in the sight of the LORD.*

1 KINGS 22:43

We don't hear the word *revival* tossed around much these days. In the mid-nineteenth century revival meetings were common. Economic downfall before and after the Civil War in the 1860s brought hardship. Despair ran rampant. People were beyond discouraged at the state of events in the country. Does that sound familiar today?

Ordinary people who loved Jesus, like you and me, began organizing prayer meetings. The meetings started popping up in towns and cities across America.

WEEK TWO

In New York City alone, after banks were failing and the stock market crashed, these events triggered more than 10,000 people gathering daily for prayer. Revival meetings filled to overflowing with people crying out to God in desperate times. These meetings were considered a place where God showed up in ways out of the ordinary Sunday church service. The stories of transformation and answered prayer spread like wildfire, jumping oceans to spread across countries such as Scotland, England, Wales, Ireland, and beyond. God was on the move, and it changed generations of Christians.³

Here we find Israel in a place similar to the one we studied in Week One. A kingdom divided after Solomon—stripped of wealth by foreign nations, unrest, oppression, and enemies pressing in on every side. Two successive kings, descendants of David and Solomon, father and son, Rehoboam and Abijam, do little to help the situation. They are bent on practicing evil and turning Judah over to destruction. After Abijam's death, there is a crack of light in the darkness of leadership. Along comes Solomon's great-grandson, Asa, who is crowned king after his father's reign of just three years. We see hope for reforms in a new direction—a changing of the guard, bringing revival to Judah. Asa is the first of the four reforming rulers in Judah, the other three being Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

God says this of Asa in 1 Kings 15:11: “Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as David his father had done.” Maybe Asa learned from watching his father and grandfather and discovered the clues left by the legacy of his great-great-grandfather, King David, that the only way back to God is through the obedience of revival to restore the legacy.

WEEK 2 | DAY 1

GRANDMOTHERS

When we talk about obedience I immediately think about the first word my children spoke, NO! As they developed their vocabulary, it didn't matter what the question was because no was the most frequent answer. When trying to steer them to obey, their initial response to their mom was to say no. They soon learned it was better to say yes and be obedient rather than risk the consequences for their behavior.

I am hoping that you have a wholehearted yes to learning about our first godly king Asa, and how his obedience changed the cultural landscape of Judah. We are going to dig right in this week and use our masterful tools to not only extract the truth we find in God's Word but also lay the first of **seven pillars** we will discover in this study that will help us live faithful lives and leave a lasting influence. Our first pillar is *Reviving Obedience*. At the back of the book, you can find a page that lists all seven pillars and brief summaries of each.

SURVEY

Read 1 Kings 15:8–24 and 2 Chronicles 14–16.

Now let's begin to unearth the clues to discover revival in our lives.

You are going to fill in a Regnal Chart for each king, with observations. I'll fill in this first one to help you begin, and you may also refer back to the Regnal Formula chart in Week One, Day One for the descriptors of each element. Feel free to add any other observations you might find in the evaluation and narrative material sections from your earlier reading.

JUDAH REGNAL FORMULA: KING ASA

ELEMENTS		ASA OF JUDAH: 1 KINGS 15:8-24 AND 2 CHRONICLES 14-16
1	SYNCHRONISM	In the 20th year of Jeroboam, king of Israel
2	ACCESSION AGE	Not mentioned
3	REIGN LENGTH	41 years
4	MOTHER'S NAME	Maacah (in this instance his mother isn't listed but this is his grandmother)
5	EVALUATION	"He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as David his father had done." 1 Kings 15:11
6	HIGH PLACES	Asa removed all the idols his fathers had made, but didn't remove the high places
7	NARRATIVE MATERIAL	He removed his grandmother from being queen mother because she made an image of an idol; he restored the altar of the LORD, made a covenant with all the people to seek the LORD, brought into the house of God things that his father had dedicated. (2 Chr. 15)
8	ANNALS REFERENCE	1 Kings 15:23: "The rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, and all that he did, and the cities that he built, are they not written . . ."
9	DEATH NOTICE	He was buried with his father in the city of David his father. Jehoshaphat reigned in his place. 1 Kings 15:24

If you could choose one phrase to describe King Asa's reign, what would it be?

What are some of King Asa's characteristics?

What were some of King Asa's reforms?

What was the cost to Asa's family in carrying out the reforms? (1 Kings 15:13)

Why is removing his grandmother significant?

Read Exodus 20:3–6. *What does God say about idols? Why is it important to follow this command?*

EXCAVATE

As I shared in Week One, my two grandmothers were as opposite as night and day. One left a legacy of truth and love in Jesus, and the other left a path of brokenness and hurt caused by alcohol abuse. I never knew the grandmother who chose the path of addiction because she died when I was a toddler. But by God's grace, my dad chose a legacy his children want to follow and reversed the destruction. The key word here is "chose."

Dad decided to follow Jesus hard and fast when I was a teenager and not let his past define his future or the future of his family. I am grateful to my dad for his choice, although I know his painful past threatened to influence his legacy. He brought spiritual revival to our family through his intentional decision to turn away from the path his parents modeled.

Scripture doesn't tell us of the relationship between Asa and his grandmother. We can only speculate the difficulty for King Asa to remove her from her position and strip her of her title. At the very least, there may have been other family members or palace attendants who frowned on his decision. We don't know, but let's say she went kicking and screaming, which would have made it more difficult for King Asa.

What does this significant choice reveal about his devotion to God?

FIELDNOTES

It's easy to blame unruly family members in our family tree for our behavior and it's hard to instead choose obedience in order to break the chain and invite revival. We might smile, almost boasting, and say, "Yes, I have a quick temper because I am Irish, and we Irish have been feisty for generations; it's just the nature of who we are." Or, "Don't you know that all Germans are stubborn?" Or, "Our grandfather says that what makes us strong is our _____." Then you can fill in the blank with whatever has been adopted as acceptable.

Revival doesn't come without repentance and the obedience to cause a major paradigm shift in the generational sin pattern. Just as Asa had to take a sobering look at his family and courageously make changes, we too can't excuse generations of attitudes and behaviors if we want to invite revival into our life to change the future. We can, with the Holy Spirit's help, remove attitudes and behaviors that have been entrenched for so long in our family that they are seen as "normal." If we are going to seek revival, we have to investigate those places in our lives that for generations may have become strongholds and held us back from pursuing God with our whole hearts.

Where does revival need to happen in your life?

Is there anyone in your family tree whose influence or sin patterns have created a struggle for you to follow God with your whole heart?

How can you wisely protect your heart from allowing their influence to keep you from obeying God in revival? Take a few minutes and pray for them, asking God to bring restoration to their heart.

As we finish up today's lesson, review the chart about King Asa. Is there any specific phrase or Scripture that resonates?

WEEK 2 | DAY 2

REMOVING THE HIGH PLACES

When I visited Cambodia several years ago, it wrecked my heart. I've seen poverty on many levels but never the combination of both physical and spiritual poverty. It was horrific as I drove through the filthy, smoke-filled city streets witnessing religious practices of idol worship that only intensifies the cycle of unimaginable poverty.

Little children hungry and dirty, soliciting despicable acts for adults, the evidence of human trafficking behind dark torn curtains. On every hill or mountain is a temple set up for the worship of a false god. They rose over the city and the villages we visited; the spiritual darkness suffocated my spirit. I then understood the meaning of high places from Scripture and realized that I too have my high places. They may not be stone and mortar sitting on top of a hill. They are people and things I put in place of God—human devices that create unrest and oppression, robbing my peace. They tempt me away from being obedient and pursuing revival, from making the right decision to choose a godly life and legacy.

High places. We all have them. And just as God asked Judah and Israel to tear them down, He asks us to do the same, and for one reason: so we can experience revival in our soul and worship Him alone. Revival keeps us soft and tender to the voice of Jesus and brings peace. Revival brings healing to our relationships and changes the landscape of the generations.

SURVEY

Read Deuteronomy 6:1–9 and Deuteronomy 12:1–14.

The high places in the Bible were places of worship with shrines where people could practice all forms of evil rituals. God had forbidden His people to engage in these practices.

Before we look at what God says about high places, list God's specific instructions to His people in Deuteronomy 6:1–9.

What are the primary reasons that God says these instructions are so important?

Who were these instructions to be passed down to? Why?

Now let's look at Deuteronomy 12:1–14. List the steps God outlined for removing the high places and for worshiping Him.

STEPS TO REMOVE THE HIGH PLACES	STEPS TO WORSHIP GOD

Read 2 Chronicles 14:2–5. *What is the progression of steps that Asa followed that brought peace to the kingdom of Judah?*

How is the order of what happened important in these verses?

Do you recognize any high places in your life? If so, write about them here.

Are you missing joy and peace? How might you experience revival in your heart?

In your family and among those in your sphere of influence, who has the most to gain when you seek to follow God's heart in revival by removing your high places? Why?

EXCAVATE

I have to confess, the older I get, the consequences of not being obedient scare me to death! As I read about the kings of Judah, so many of them didn't follow through with their whole hearts. It is easy to look at their life and point a finger as to the reasons why. The observation that sticks with me as I read the account of the kings is that many obeyed God, but only half-heartedly. They still kept the high places, and that decision became a snare to the nation they were leading. Many times, this happened as a result of acquiring more wealth and success. They became dependent on their resources rather than God.

This was true of King Asa: "The high places were not taken away. Nevertheless, the heart of Asa was wholly true to the LORD all his days" (1 Kings 15:14). God, in His mercy, still gives this account of Asa about his heart being with Him. But not removing the high places had implications for the generations to come, and we will see that later in our study as we read about the end of King Asa's life.

I can be stubborn, just like King Asa, with the habits I've erected and justified, thinking they won't hurt anything or anybody. And yet I want my family and friends to say my heart too was completely with the Lord my entire life, including tearing down my high places.

What if we work hard to go further, so the generations watching and following don't become trapped by our high places? Sobering thought, don't you think?

Find a quiet place and take a few minutes to write a prayer listing your high places. (See the description of a high place in this week's Artifacts: Digging Deeper section if you need more definitions.)

Ask God to help you tear down the high places and replace those areas with obedience so you can open the door to revival. It is always helpful when removing sin in our life to replace it with a verse of Scripture. God's Word brings revival.

FIELDNOTES

Can you tell I like charts?

In the chart, list your high places. Fill in the second column with a verse or verses that you can pray to help you begin to tear that high place down. Finally, jot down an action step for obeying. I've given you an example of a high place that I've asked God to help me conquer.

MY HIGH PLACE	SCRIPTURE TO PRAY OVER	MY ACTION PLAN
<p>EXAMPLE: Trying to win others' approval to appear perfect and without failure.</p>	<p>"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10)</p>	<p>Take a step back and ask myself, "What is my motive for gaining approval in this situation?" Stop and ask Jesus to help me in the moment.</p>

For the next seven days, make a commitment to review each verse you chose to cover the high place you want removed. Review your plan when you are tempted to rebuild the high place. Ask God for a prayer of covering for the next generation that, because of your example, they will see nothing can keep them from depending on God with wholehearted obedience.

This is challenging work we've done in our study today, and I am so proud of you for taking the time to listen to God and soak in His Word! We may not see the payoff immediately, but I trust the generations that follow will thank us for our faithful commitment to be wholly dependent on God in worship.

My maternal grandmother was faithful and true to Jesus. She was not perfect by any means, and even with Alzheimer's disease dimming her mind, she cried out to God in songs and Scripture until her death. She had a fortified plan, and when her mind betrayed her body, the altar where she worshiped her whole life rose above. There isn't a week that goes by that her influence doesn't impact my life.

As we finish up today, read 2 Chronicles 15:1–4 aloud. In the space below, write the phrase you found to have the most impact.

WEEK 2 | DAY 3

THE HEART OF REVIVAL

Emma Dryer was a woman in the nineteenth century who lived a quiet and safe life dedicated to God but not necessarily entirely devoted to Him until deep trials came into her life. She enjoyed life as the head instructor at Illinois State University, training young women to be teachers. She became severely ill with typhoid fever, which was raging in the United States in the mid-1800s. Emma was not used to being inactive, and while lying on her sickbed fighting a fever, she asked God for a second chance to serve Him intentionally. God's Word brought fresh understanding as to His purposes and plans. God did heal her, and this was the spark that lit Emma's heart on fire to serve a dying world.

After recovering from her illness, she visited friends in Chicago. Through a series of events, including the Great Chicago Fire, God revealed her assignment to her. Her heart was drawn to the wayward women who had recently arrived in the city. Many, single like Emma, took work as prostitutes and barmaids. Emma was determined to help these women and others and knew God would guide her. Her goal was to "get a Bible into the hand of every woman in the city and train them to lead Bible studies of their own."⁴ She wanted them to know how to lead devotions in their own families.

Emma met and worked with D. L. Moody, joining him in establishing what would become Moody Bible Institute. Emma was passionate about the Bible and wanted to train up as many men and women as possible to seek revival to understand God's Word and His truth.⁵

This story reminds me how we can love God, as Emma did before her illness, and even serve Him but without embracing wholehearted commitment. Instead, we play it safe and trust God only as far as our “safety net” extends. Emma’s life is such an example of becoming more devoted through trials and serving Him faithfully until the end.

I want to spend our time today talking about what true obedience and revival look like. We read about King Asa and his determination to deconstruct what his previous family rulers had built on total spiritual adultery. King Abijam, Asa’s father, even talked the talk when he went up in battle against King Jeroboam, taunting him. Second Chronicles 13 tells the battle story and how God gave King Abijam victory because “they cried out to the LORD” for help (2 Chron. 13:14).

Yet, in the books of Kings, we see God’s final verdict of King Abijam. Sadly, he walked in all the ways of the sins of his father Rehoboam and his grandfather Solomon. We are told that his heart wasn’t wholly true to Yahweh (1 Kings 15:3). Along with his father, he is listed as one of the evil kings, except for this single victory in Chronicles. His obedience didn’t last; there was no revival.

SURVEY

Read 2 Chronicles 15:1–12.

Write out 2 Chronicles 15:1–7 in your notebook or journal.

What can we discover in these verses about the requirements for true revival?

Reread 2 Chronicles 15:8–11. *What did Asa do as a result of the prophet Azariah's message?*

Write out verse 12 word for word.

*What does it look like for us to seek God with all our heart and our soul?
What does that look like for you today, tomorrow, and this coming week? Be
specific. Don't rush an answer to just fill in the blank. You might want to think
about it for a while and come back and write it down.*

EXCAVATE

Three things precede true revival that we can learn from this story in 2 Chronicles. Use the tools you've acquired to dig them out.

1. 2 Chronicles 15:2 _____

2. 2 Chronicles 15:4 _____

3. 2 Chronicles 15:8 _____

Let's see if we came up with a match.

1. The first thing that precedes revival is: we have to be looking for one. And that means seeking God and listening to His voice. This is what King Asa did, and he listened to the prophet Azariah (not to be confused with King Azariah) because Asa had the heart to follow God (v. 8). When we seek God, He promises He will find us!

2. The second thing that precedes revival is: we have to turn to Him no matter what. As the passage implies, when we are in distress, we must surrender to God and not try to figure out our dire situation all by ourselves. This was the downfall of many of the kings and even Asa at the end of his reign. Whether he forgot or was too confident in his success, we don't know. But no matter what, in all things and at all times, we must surrender.

For example, Asa made a grave error in 2 Chronicles 16:1–10 by trusting his wealth and the king of Syria to protect him from the king of Israel, Baasha. As a result, he received a visit from Hanani, the seer who rebuked Asa's action of depending on King Aram of Syria rather than God. King Asa became angry, threw the seer in prison, and didn't heed God's message sent by Hanani nor accept the consequences of his sin.

The author of Chronicles ends his account of Asa's reign right there, and the king who started well finished foolishly all because of this one act. However, I would venture to say that there was a culmination of many small decisions. These decisions may not have been significant in themselves and may even have appeared

harmless, but they may have led Asa to take matters into his own hands and decide what was best.

3. The third and last precedent for a revival is: we have to be obedient and walk out that obedience. In other words, we need to act. Note what Asa does in 2 Chronicles 15:8: “He took courage and put away the detestable idols.” And he “repaired the altar of the LORD.”

The word courage in this passage is the Hebrew word *chazaq* and means “to fasten upon, seize, be strong, fortify.”⁶ Asa needed courage and lots of it! If we remember, his father Abijam did the opposite and rode the cultural tide of idolatry. For Asa, doing something meant going against the people his father had reigned over, not to mention his father (and the precedent set by his grandfather and his great-grandfather Solomon). They were comfortable with idolatry, and all of Israel and Judah worshiped idols. Asa was the first ruler to change the spiritual climate in generations. God sent Azariah to encourage Asa and also give him a message of hope and challenge: “The LORD is with you while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you” (2 Chron. 15:2).

Is this you? Are you the first in generations to take a stand to love the Lord your God, breaking the chains of sin and bondage in your family? Take courage, fasten yourself to the Lord like Asa did, and do what you need to do to preserve the generations that follow. Your godly influence can last for eternity.

FIELDNOTES

Psalm 19:7 confirms what is necessary for our lives for revival in our souls: “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.” Just like the kings of Judah, listening to God’s Word is the glue to faithful and lasting influence.

Read Psalm 19:7 aloud and then write it out word for word.

Take a few minutes to stop and thank God for His faithfulness in your life and renew your courage to do the same as Asa did to create a faithful legacy.

WEEK 2 | DAY 4

TELLING THE TRUTH

The courage that Asa displayed left a mark on his son, the next king of Judah, Jehoshaphat. In the books of Kings, there are only a few verses dedicated to the mention of Jehoshaphat, and the narrative changes for the several following chapters. The focus is on the northern kingdom and its rulers. At the end of 1 Kings 22, the regnal formula is given.

Now you get the chance to complete your first regnal formula on your own for King Jehoshaphat.

Reread 1 Kings 22:41–44 and read 2 Chronicles 17:1–6.

JUDAH REGNAL FORMULA: KING JEHOSHAPHAT

ELEMENTS		JEHOSHAPHAT OF JUDAH: 1 KINGS 22:41–50; 2 CHRONICLES 17–20
1	SYNCHRONISM	In the 4th year of Ahab, king of Israel
2	ACCESSION AGE	
3	REIGN LENGTH	
4	MOTHER'S NAME	
5	EVALUATION	
6	HIGH PLACES	
7	NARRATIVE MATERIAL	
8	ANNALS REFERENCE	
9	DEATH NOTICE	

SURVEY

Read 2 Chronicles 17:3–6.

In the opening explanation of Jehoshaphat's reign, we find that his father's courage had rubbed off on him, and he continued the reforms that King Asa had started.

What does the author say about Jehoshaphat?

His father Asa modeled for his son what it looked like to stand against the tide and speak truth to restore Judah by turning the people away from idol worship. King Jehoshaphat not only removed the high places that his father neglected to remove but took the Asherim out of Judah. This was the Canaanite fertility goddess, also referred to as the Asherah or Asherah poles, erected for idol worship.

Read 2 Chronicles 15:16–17: *What else did Asa model for his son?*

EXCAVATE

Telling the truth to a family member to change the course of sin in a generation likely didn't come easy. But King Asa followed through on his commitment to God, gathered his courage, and kicked his mom's idols to the curb. We ultimately answer to no man or woman, even if it is a close family member, but only to God. We and we alone are held responsible for our obedience.

This can cause great angst in a family to break the bondage of sin, but I love how Scripture refers to both Asa, the father, and Jehoshaphat, the son, as having the courage to follow God instead of the family rules.

I grew up in a home with an angry father, and he passed that on to his children. He surrendered his anger to God when I was a teenager. He learned to manage it, but it wasn't until I was married and had children that I saw the transformation.⁷ It was something I had to come to terms with as a believer, and I knew that I didn't want to pass anger on to my children, as tempting as it was to justify my outbursts as a young mother. The frightened look on my oldest son's face as he backed away from me when he was three years old was enough to convince me that I needed to get my anger under the control of the Holy Spirit.

As I managed my anger, God captured my attention in a unique way when I saw the movie *Tombstone*⁸ in the theater. This classic western tells the story of Wyatt Earp and his brothers cleaning up the Wild West from all the bad guys in Tombstone, Arizona. A portion of the movie highlights one of the bad guys, Ringo, who Doc Holliday refers to as having a black heart of hatred, anger, and violence.

Let me back up here. When I was growing up, my dad would tell us stories of a relative on his side of the family who rode with the Ringo Brothers. Later, as I did some genealogical research, I learned that Ringo was my great-grandmother's uncle. The same dude in the movie. When I was in the theater and saw the evil and hatred that this man displayed, I had to excuse myself and leave the theater. I was undone with grief and sadness over the way Ringo's anger had become a thread in our family history. On the way home that night, I asked God to remove the black stain on our heritage and help me break the chain of anger and rage in our family, starting with me.

FIELDNOTES

How about you? How can you stand for truth in order to break the sin in your life or family tree? Talk to God about it and ask Him to give you the courage He gave to Asa and Jehoshaphat.

WEEK 2 | DAY 5

FRIENDLY ALLIANCES AND COSTLY ALIGNMENT

Looking back over your regnal formula chart for Jehoshaphat you will notice in the synchronism column that Jehoshaphat ascends the throne during the reign of King Ahab of Israel. Ahab became king when Jehoshaphat's father Asa was in the thirty-eighth year of his reign (1 Kings 16:29).

First Kings 16:29–33 lists all the evil and idolatry Ahab commits and then finishes with, “Ahab did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.” He had a partner in crime in his wife Jezebel, who has been referred to as one of the vilest women in biblical times. Her hatred for Yahweh and her seeking to kill the prophets of God are only some of her evil deeds, let alone her worship of Baal. God sent many warnings to Ahab, all of which he refused to heed. Nearly six and a half chapters of 1 Kings tell of the downfall of Jehoshaphat's counterpart King Ahab.

Yet, in Chronicles, we find that Jehoshaphat has decided to make a marriage alliance between his son Jehoram and Ahab's daughter, Athaliah. (These two will come up in next week's study—stay tuned!) This, as we will find, has a lasting impact, not only on their generation but the generations to follow.

SURVEY

Read the story of Ahab's invitation to Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 18:3–26.

What is the contrast between Ahab's method of inquiring of the Lord compared to that of King Jehoshaphat?

Why was Ahab so upset with the prophet Micaiah?

Describe what happens in 2 Chronicles 18:28–34.

Now, look at 2 Chronicles 19:1–3; what happened, and why was Jehoshaphat rebuked?

What lesson do you think he learned after Ahab's death?

EXCAVATE

I want to close this week with a sobering truth, one that I hope will cause us all to think about how our alliances not only impact us but those closest to us. When King Jehoshaphat died, his son Jehoram ascended the throne. What you are about to read I find very disturbing, but there is a lesson here for everyone.

Read 2 Chronicles 21:1–6.

Briefly describe what happened. Who died?

Even though Jehoram was a king in Judah, what does verse 6 say about him? What king is he likened to?

I can't help but notice who Jehoram married: Ahab's daughter, Athaliah. We can only guess that her influence over Jehoshaphat's son was not positive and did not lead him to follow God as his father had. Just as God rebuked Solomon for allowing his wives to turn his heart against God, evil was also prevalent in the house of Ahab and his wife Jezebel.

It shouldn't surprise us what happened to the rest of Jehoshaphat's family. He had set up his children and his sons to secure the borders around Judah by giving them the fortified cities and the wealth to maintain their rule. Perhaps Jehoram's siblings and some of the princes of Israel were a threat to Jehoram and he felt the need to grab all he could, but 2 Kings 8:18 says he walked in the ways of the house

of Ahab. All this we could speculate is because of his father King Jehoshaphat's alliance with King Ahab.

King Jehoshaphat's "25-year reign included some of the highest points of faith in the Lord and lowest points of failure to trust in the Lord." One need only read 2 Chronicles 20 to see his incredible trust in God to deliver him from three strong enemies who had come to destroy Judah. I can't help but wonder if the ending of his friendship with Ahab after his death when this great victory took place freed him from the evil influence. You can read more about the alliance between King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 18. In the midst of his reign are also some of the lowest points.

I hope we can see here as we finish this week how the alliances we make, whether in friendship or family, impact our children. Since we spend most of our time with the people we enter into partnership with, it's vital that we share the same values. Otherwise, we run the risk of not only exposing ourselves to temptation but exposing our children. This isn't to say that we don't encourage our children to spend time with others who aren't Christ followers. We also can't choose every family member. We want to be a light and influence others for Jesus.

Ultimately, all our relationships have the potential to impact our relationship with God, for good or for evil.

FIELDNOTES

We started this week by looking at the heart of revival. Revival keeps our hearts soft and close to God and helps keep our alliances in check. This critical first pillar of *Reviving Obedience* helps drive us to faithful living with a lasting influence.

As we close, let's also reflect on our alliances in friendship and family and ask some tough questions. Have I allowed a friendship or close ties with a family member to influence me away from my faith in God? Have I allowed myself to make small compromises due to their influence?

Despite the mistakes that Kings Asa and Jehoshaphat made, they both dared to do the right thing (2 Chron. 15:8; 17:6). The two key markers that were a credit to their reign was that they both removed the high places in Judah, and they directed the people to seek the Lord. We can apply this by removing the high places in our own lives and being obedient to continue doing so and seek the Lord—this will keep our hearts soft toward revival. The riveting effect is that removing our own high places keeps our path of faithfulness secure and our influence abounding in long-lasting goodness.

As you've reflected on the questions above regarding alliances and the influence of others, write out a prayer to God listing the small compromises you might have made. Ask God to help you be aware of what needs to change to keep your heart soft toward continual revival.

PRAYER

Dear God . . .

High Places

In the Old Testament, high places are called *bamah* in Hebrew which means “high place,” “height,” or “back of an animal.”¹⁰ The term *bamah* appears over a hundred times in Scripture in reference to a religious site. The worshipers at these high places burned incense or offered sacrifices. In Israel, *bamah* were sites of worship and located at the summits of hills. They were often open and natural areas, but the term *bamah* also can mean a structure. Most likely they were predominantly of Canaanite origin. The Canaanites had no temples, so they built smaller shrines or altars to worship. As the Israelites settled into the land and established permanent structures, temples replaced high places as the central place of worship.

Early in Israel’s history, high places were considered acceptable places of worship (1 Sam. 7:17, Ramah; 1 Sam. 10:5, 13, Gibeah-Elohim; and 1 Kings 3:4, Gibeon). The *Lexham Bible Dictionary* gives an explanation as to why they might have been acceptable before the temple was built.

Samuel the prophet worshiped at a high place (see 1 Sam. 9:11–13). There is no indication in this passage that this was not acceptable or a reflection on his ministry. We can conclude that the use of high places was approved because there was no temple during that time where sacrifices could be offered.¹¹

Read 1 Kings 3:2–3. What do these verses say about these early high places of worship?



After Solomon built the temple, it became the only acceptable site of worship, and the high places were condemned as religious sites to offer sacrifices. During the reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh, there were high places in the valley of Ben Hinnom that were used for the unthinkable ritual of child sacrifice. God noted these places as evil and forbade these places be used to worship Him. And yet, as we will discover, worship at the high places abounded, even after the reforming kings Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah broke down the previous generations of altars. But they were never completely removed. Archaeological expeditions in Syria and Palestine have revealed open-air platforms and altars supposedly associated with cultic sites.¹²

After both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah went into exile, Ezekiel 43:6–9 uses the high places as examples of the worst sort of evil. The prophet refers to the kings as defiling God’s holy name by consorting with temple prostitutes and committing detestable acts during their reign. All these passages about the high places in the books of Kings and Chronicles reveal that the people of God confused the Canaanite high places of worship with the earlier acceptable high places of worship before the temple was built.

Why do you think the high places were such an affront to God after the temple was constructed?



Interested in the whole book?
Select your preferred book seller:

[MOODY PUBLISHERS](#) 

[AMAZON](#) 

[APPLE BOOKS](#) 

[WALMART](#) 

[GOOGLE PLAY](#) 

[TARGET](#) 

[LIFEWAY](#) 

[BARNES & NOBLE](#) 

[CHRISTIANBOOK.COM](#) 