

11. Living off other's faith

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It is one thing to get help from others from time to time when the situation is desperate, but living off someone, including family members, all the time is a completely different subject and it is not good. You may have a particular person or people in mind right now when you hear this. That person might still live with his elderly mom or dad or relatives, because he is too lazy to go out and get a job to support himself or herself. I, too, can name a few people whom I know in this category.

We can not live off other people all the time. There is the time a person has to break off and be on his own. I love my daughter Michelle very much. But I was glad when she moved out for a couple of reasons. First, it shows that she is now an independent grown-up beautiful married woman. Second, her cat moved out with her.

Not living off someone is especially true when it comes spiritual things. We must have our own faith in God. We are going to talk more about this a little later.

We now move to the southern kingdom of Judah where king Ahaziah was killed by the commander of Israel army Jehu near Jezreel. We get to meet a wicked queen mother Athaliah who wouldn't blink her eyes for killing anyone who got in her ways as well as a young king who pretty much lived off the spirituality of his uncle.

A. THE ESCAPE FROM THE BLOOD THIRSTY GRANDMA

2 Kings 11:1-3 When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs. 2 But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered; and they hid him and his nurse in the bedroom, from Athaliah, so that he was not killed. 3 So he was hidden with her in the house of the Lord for six years, while Athaliah reigned over the land.

If someone says that Jezebel was the worst woman who ever lived, I'd beg the difference. Her daughter Athaliah who was married to king Jehoram of Judah would top her wicked mama hands down any day. Jezebel killed godly prophets and people, but Athaliah had killed her own family members, like grandsons, to get the throne and power.

I've read the Bible countless times, but I don't remember that a woman was on the throne in ancient Israel until this week's study preparation. Athaliah was a power monger just like her mama Jezebel – I must say, "like mother like daughter."

Behind this cruel killing spree by Athaliah, there was satan who wanted to destroy God's plan for the Messiah Jesus through the lineage of king David. The northern kingdom Israel's kings were from just about any tribes of Israel. But the southern kingdom Judah's kings were exclusively from the descendants of king David as God promised to David.

2 Samuel 7:16 And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.

Since the fall of man, God declared to satan that he would bruise the Messiah's heel, but He would bruise satan's head in Genesis 3, he was doing everything to stop Jesus' plan of the salvation for mankind. Haman tried in the Book of Esther; the

Roman emperor Titus tried in A.D. 70; Hitler killed six million Jews and wanted to wipe out the rest; KKK wanted to cleanse the Jews out of America; now the moronic Iranian President whose name I don't care to pronounce wants to wipe out the existence of Israel from map. They all have tried, but they have not and they will not succeed. Because it is the Lord Himself who protects the Jews.

God is still on the throne and has His servants prepared to act. In a world that seems to be controlled by deceptions and extreme selfish ambition from Washington D.C. to the utter most isolated place of the third world countries, there are still people like Jehoiada and Jehosheba who have faith in God's Word and courageously do His will. I hope and pray that all of you are those godly people.

Jehoiada was the high priest and Jehosheba his wife was a princess, a daughter of king Jehoram and a sister to King Ahaziah, whom Jehu had slain. This made her an aunt to little Joash. That such a godly woman should come out of that ungodly family is a miracle of the grace of God. Little Joash lived and grew up in the temple for six years under the radar of Athaliah.

B. CROWNING THE BOY KING

2 Kings 11:4-5 In the seventh year Jehoiada sent and brought the captains of hundreds--of the bodyguards and the escorts--and brought them into the house of the Lord to him. And he made a covenant with them and took an oath from them in the house of the Lord, and showed them the king's son. 5 Then he commanded them, saying, "This is what you shall do: One-third of you who come on duty on the Sabbath shall be keeping watch over the king's house,

2 Kings 11:9-12 So the captains of the hundreds did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. Each of them took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath, with those who were going off duty on the Sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest. 10 And the priest gave the captains of hundreds the spears and shields which had belonged to King David, that were in the temple of the Lord. 11 Then the escorts stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, all around the king, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, by the altar and the house. 12 And he brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, and gave him the Testimony; they made him king and anointed him, and they clapped their hands and said, "Long live the king!"

Jehoiada wisely chose the Sabbath for the day of the coup, because that was the day when the guards changed their shifts and they could assemble two groups of guards at the temple at the same time without attracting attention.

Then they brought out the boy king. This was a dramatic moment. For six years everyone believed there were no more surviving heirs of David's royal line and there was no legitimate ruler to dethrone the wicked Athaliah. One reason Athaliah was able to reign for six years was that no one knew any alternative.

Many people live under the reign of satan because they don't really know there is a legitimate King ready to take reign in their lives. Though unbelievers are the slaves of satan, they don't know that they are. Many drug addicts, alcoholics and those who are addicted to pornography or gambling often say that they can quit anytime. As long as they think they are free, satan can do whatever he chooses to do in their lives. But it is the Lord who can truly set them free.

John 8:36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

C. THE EXECUTION OF ATHALIAH

2 Kings 11:13-16 Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the escorts and the people, she came to the people in the temple of the Lord. 14 When she looked, there was the king standing by a pillar according to custom; and the leaders and the trumpeters were by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. So Athaliah tore her clothes and cried out, "Treason! Treason!" 15 And Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the army, and said to them, "Take her outside under guard, and slay with the sword whoever follows her." For the priest had said, "Do not let her be killed in the house of the Lord." 16 So they seized her; and she went by way of the horses' entrance into the king's house, and there she was killed.

I don't think that Athaliah was a happy camper, because her illegitimate power was about to end. Satan knows that there will be a day when he is going to lose all of his power and he is going to perish forever into the lake of fire. Until then, he will do everything he can to steal, deceive, destroy and kill.

Athaliah's cry of treason is ironic, considering her own treasonous murders to seize the throne.

D. REVIVAL AND RESTORATION

2 Kings 11:17-19 Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord, the king, and the people, that they should be the Lord's people, and also between the king and the people. 18 And all the people of the land went to the temple of Baal, and tore it down. They thoroughly broke in pieces its altars and images, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord. 19 Then he took the captains of hundreds, the bodyguards, the escorts, and all the people of the land; and they brought the king down from the house of the Lord, and went by way of the gate of the escorts to the king's house. Then he sat on the throne of the kings.

This is the beginning of a return to God. Jehoiada the priest now leads in a movement to return to the worship of their God Jehovah. The worship of Baal was prevalent and it had penetrated even into Judah through the influence of Athaliah. Probably the people were still going to the temple of the Lord, but they were worshipping Baal at the same time.

The same thing is going on today. Many people are religious enough to go to church on Sunday, but they live for themselves the rest of the week. It is no wonder why so many churches in America are powerless against Satan and the ungodly influences of the world. They try to be politically correct and they embrace homosexuality and consider pre-marital sex as norm.

The explanation is not found in a building, but it is found in Jesus Christ. He is the truth, He is the Life and He is the way of salvation. The true faith in God starts at believing the Lord Jesus and obeying everything He says in the Bible, period.

Don't think that revival happens as men prepare an event and have a hyped-up preacher yelling and screaming talking about hellfire and brimstone. Nothing happens until a sinner or backslidden believer comes to God and asks for His forgiveness for his sins and truly repents. Then the Holy spirit moves in the life of the repented believer and starts to change the person's life radically and godly. That is

the true concept of revival. Revival starts with us individually when we really start to obey Him.

Here are some questions we can ask ourselves to see where we are spiritually:

1. Do I love to read and meditate on the Word of God daily? Yes or No
2. Are my personal daily devotions consistent and meaningful? Yes or No
3. Do I practically apply God's Word to my everyday life? Yes or No
4. Am I quick to recognize and agree with God in confession when I have sinned? Yes or No
5. Do I consistently seek forgiveness from those I wrong or offend? Yes or No
6. Do I consistently obey what I know God wants me to do? Yes or No

Don't give me an excuse of not having enough time in your day that you cannot read the Bible and pray. If you have the time to check your e-mails, get on internet, send text messages, read newspaper, watch TV and chat on the phone with your family members and friends, you have time to read the Word of God and pray everyday. I am not saying that you have to spend hours in prayers and reading the Bible. 15 to 20 minutes per day is enough time to get to know Him as a start.

Note the sequence of the Jews' revival:

1. They made a covenant between God and themselves.
2. They destroyed and removed the idols out of their land.
3. They appointed officers over the house of the Lord
4. They brought the king into their midst and sat him on the throne.

Let's apply this into our lives:

1. You need to make a covenant between yourself and God.
2. You need to destroy and remove any idol out of your heart.
3. You need to ask the Holy Spirit to govern your heart.
4. You need to bring Jesus as your King in your life.

E. SURRENDER TO THE ENEMY WITHOUT A FIGHT

2 Kings 12:17-18 Hazael king of Syria went up and fought against Gath, and took it; then Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem. 18 And Jehoash king of Judah took all the sacred things that his fathers, Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own sacred things, and all the gold found in the treasuries of the house of the Lord and in the king's house, and sent them to Hazael king of Syria. Then he went away from Jerusalem.

Jehoash was the same person as Joash. It is like 'Tom' and 'Thomas' or 'Bob' and 'Robert'.

When Syrian army came to attack Jerusalem with an inferior army, but God used them as an instrument of judgment against the disobedient Joash. Joash didn't even bother to ask God's help. He just surrendered to Hazael king of Syria.

You may wonder, "What happened to Joash? Why do you say he was disobedient to God?" To answer that question, we have to go to the parallel chapter, 2 Chronicles 24.

F. LIVING OFF OTHER'S FAITH

2 Chronicles 24:2 Joash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest.

In other words, king Joash was doing godly things as long as priest Jehoiada was living and he was getting help from the priest. It seems nothing wrong with that. But what happened when the priest was dead?

2 Chronicles 24:17 Now after the death of Jehoiada the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king. And the king listened to them. 18 Therefore they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served wooden images and idols; and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass.

King Joash became a heathen and started to worship the very idols he had destroyed when he was young. How can this be? The answer is simple. He didn't cultivate the relationship with God personally. He was riding on the spiritual coattail of Jehoiada the priest, his uncle.

Some of you might be like Joash. You might have been spiritual because of someone near you – your parents, your husband, your wife or your relatives. I've seen people like Joash. When those who are spiritual pillars in these people's lives die or move away, all of sudden either they don't know what to do or they simply walk away from God altogether. A good beginning is no guarantee of a good ending.

Joash is a warning to us today. It isn't enough simply to know God's truth. Rather we must obey His truth from the heart. Truth in the mind can lead to obedience, but truth in the heart and obedience from the heart will produce godly character. God's Word and God's will must be internalized which means we must receive them into the heart or we can never develop consistent Christian character. Until duty and discipline become delight, we are only reluctant servants who obey God because we have to, not because we want to.

Psalm 119:9-11 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. 10 With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! 11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!

G. APPLICATIONS

1) We must have our own relationship with God apart from anyone – not living off other people's spirituality.

2) God's Word and God's will must be internalized which means we must receive them into the heart or we can never develop consistent Christian character.